

ALL THE YEAR ROUND.

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QUITE ALONE.

BOOK THE FIRST: CHILDHOOD.

CHAPTER VII. WHEN WILLIAM THE FOURTH
WAS KING.

THE epoch, there was no denying it, was a wild and dissolute one. The imprint of the Regent's cloven foot had not yet worn away. A man was upon the throne. He made a decorous king enough in his old age, mainly through the influence of a pious and admirable wife; but his youth had been the converse of reputable. The sons of George the Third had not contributed in any great degree to the elevation of the moral tone of the country. The trial of Queen Caroline, and the private life of George the Fourth, had done a good deal towards depraving the national manners. There were no young princesses save one, the Hope of England, whom her good mother kept sedulously aloof from the polluting atmosphere of the age. The Duchess of Kent and her daughter went tranquilly about from watering-place to watering-place, and gathered shells and weeds upon the sands, and visited poor people in their cottages, and sat under evangelical ministers, and allowed the age to go by, and to be as wild and dissolute as it chose. They hoped and waited for better times, and the better times came at last, and have continued, and will endure, we trust.

Party spirit ran high. We had been on the verge of a revolution about Catholic Emancipation, of another about Parliamentary Reform. Everything was disorganised. There were commissions sitting upon everything, with a view to the abrogation of most things. Barristers of seven years' standing, fattened upon the treasures wrung from the sinecurists, and the pension-holders of the old Black Book. Commissioners and inspectors became as great a nuisance and burden to the country as the clerks of the Pipe or the Tellers of the Exchequer had been. Everybody had his theory for regenerating society, but lacked sincere faith in his own nostrums; and so, after a while, deserted them. It was a reign of terror without much blood. The warfare was mostly one of words and principles, abusive language being in vogue among perfectly unscrupulous party-writers. Reverence,

gratitude, decency, had gone to sleep for a while. O'Connell called Wellington a "stunted corporal," and Alvanley a "bloated buffoon," and Disraeli the younger "a lineal descendant of the impenitent thief." One Cocking had cast himself into space in a parachute, and, coming into contact with the earth, was smashed to death. A crafty Frenchman lured many hundreds of simpletons into taking tickets for a passage in his navigable balloon or aerial ship. Then, timeously, he ran away, and left them with their tickets, and an empty bag of oiled silk. There were people who did not believe in steam. There were others who did believe in it, but held that locomotives and paddle-steamers were only the precursors of the end of the world. Meanwhile, Chat Moss had been drained by Stephenson, and Brunel was piercing the Thames Tunnel. But nothing was settled. Nobody knew where anything was to end. Steam and scepticism and tractarianism and Murphy's weather almanack, the abolition of slavery and the labour of children in factories, lions and tigers at Drury Lane, and the patents taken away therefrom, and from Covent Garden too; commutation of tithes and reform of municipal corporations, charity commissions and the new Poor-law, chartism, trades-unionism and the unknown tongues; oceans of pamphlets; new clubs starting up all over the West-end; pigtails, knee-breeches and hair-powder beginning to be laughed at; the Chancellor jumping up and down on the wool-sack like a parched pea in a fire-shovel, instead of gravely doubting and doubting for years, and working no end of misery and ruin, as Chancellor Eldon had done: all these things, with Irish outrages, colonial discontents and embarrassing relations with foreign powers (order reigned in Warsaw, and "Vivent les Polonais!" in Paris meant the erection of barricades and a tussle between the blouses and the soldiery), made up a chaotic whirlwind of sand and pebbles and brickbats and scraps of paper, the whole accompanied by a prodigious noise, driving peaceably-minded people half blind, and half deaf, and parcel-mad.

Francis Blunt, Esq., and Monsieur Constant, had left Stockwell shortly after eleven o'clock. The hackney-coachman had been well paid, and promised an extra fee for speed; but the era of rapid Hansoms was yet to come, and it was nearly midnight when the two jaded horses that drew

the vehicle clattered over Westminster Bridge. Mr. Blunt felt so exhausted that he was compelled to descend at a tavern on the Surrey side of the bridge and refresh himself with a small glass of brandy. He re-entered the coach, making wry faces, and declaring the liquor abominable. Constant treated the coachman to a glass of ale, but did not presume to accompany his master to the bar of the tavern. He partook, outside, of a moderate sip of his own from a small pocket-flask.

"Why didn't you tell me you had something to drink with you?" said Blunt, pettishly, as he saw his companion replace the flask in a side-pocket.

"I could not venture to ask monsieur—" began the valet, gravely.

"I dare say you couldn't, Constant. You're a sly fox, and always keep the best of the game to yourself. Here, give me the bottle. I have need of a little Dutch courage to-night."

Mr. Blunt took a pretty heavy draught of the Dutch courage, which was, indeed, the very best French cognac. He took a pretty deep draught of it, for a man of such delicately-strung nerves.

"Capital brandy," he murmured, smacking his lips. "You have a talent for buying the best of everything for yourself. Why on earth did you allow me to go into that atrocious gin-palace?"

"It is for monsieur to lead the way."

"And for you constantly and carefully to avoid following me, and to allow me to fall into the lions' den. Constant, do you know what I have to do to-night?"

"To be bold, and to win."

"You have taught me how to manage the one. I think I can depend on my own presence of mind for the other. But do you know how much I want?"

"Monsieur's wants are extensive."

"And so are yours, monsieur the sleeping partner. Egad, unless I rise from the table a winner of five thousand pounds I am a ruined man!"

"Monsieur's creditors indeed are pressing."

"The creditors be hanged," Francis Blunt, Esq., returned, with much equanimity. "It isn't for them I shall have to sit up till five o'clock this morning. But there are debts of honour, Constant, that must be paid. I owe Carlton fifteen hundred. I owe the Italian prince, what's his name?—Marigliano—a monkey. I must send that she-wolf of mine, a hundred pounds before to-morrow afternoon, or she will be crawling after me as usual. And then my ready money is all gone, or nearly so. I don't think I've got fifty pounds in my pocket. I've dropped over sixty pounds at that school at Clapham, Rhod something House, to pay for that little brat:—by your advice, Monsieur Jean Baptiste. I tell you, I must have five thousand pounds out of Debonnair before sunrise, or I am done. I must have ready money to go abroad with, and

then Dobree has most of my valuables; and then there are your wages, Constant."

"And my commission, if monsieur pleases."

"And your commission, most immaculate of commercial agents. Five per cent, is it not? You go abroad with me, Constant, so that you know I am perfectly safe. By the way, you couldn't manage to take the hundred to the she-wolf to-night, could you?"

"Ready money is not very plentiful," returned the valet, after some consideration; "but I think I can contrive to obtemperate, by a little finessing, to monsieur's demand. Might I, however, ask him to promise me one little thing?"

"What is it, Constant: a rise in your wages?"

"Monsieur's service is sufficiently remunerative," answered the valet, and I believe he spoke with perfect sincerity. "It is not that."

"What then?"

"Not to touch the dice to-night. As an amusement, they are admirable; as a commercial operation, they are destruction."

"Confound the bones, I know they are," Mr. Blunt, with some discomposure, acknowledged. "If I had stuck to the coups you taught me at Vanjohn, I should have made ten thousand this season alone. I never get that infernal box in my hand without coming to grief in some way or other. And yet what money I have won!"

"And what money lost!"

"Your answer is unanswerable. Yes; I will promise you. I will keep my head cool, and won't touch ivory to-night."

"You are going to Crockford's?"

"Must go there, you know. Shan't stop an hour. The only way of luring my pigeon out."

"And then?"

"To the umbrella-shop, of course. The worthy Count Cubford will expect his commission on the transaction, for permission to play Vanjohn in his sanctum. Everybody wants his commission now-a-days. I wonder Langhorne, of the Guards, doesn't ask for fifteen per cent for having introduced me to Debonnair."

"You will be able to afford it if you only follow the instructions I gave you. You—I mean monsieur—must keep his head very cool, and, as much as possible, his eyes fixed on his opponent. Monsieur must never lose his temper, and must never grow tired. Then, if he takes care, and Debonnair is gris enough, he will win his five thousand and more before morning."

"I believe I shall. Five thousand pounds are more than five thousand louis, most unsophisticated foreigner. Where are we? Oh, Charing-cross. We'll get rid of this ramshackle old tub here. I shall go to the club, have a warm bath, and then—"

"To St. James's-street?"

"No. Gambridge's. After that, the business of the evening will commence. The night is young yet. It isn't a quarter-past twelve."

"I shall therefore have the honour to leave monsieur?"

"Exactly, you will have that honour, most courteous Constant. You may also have the honour of staying out as late as you like on this side of six: for I can't expect to be home before that time; but please sit up for me, that you may know the results of the campaign. It may be an Austerlitz, you know, but it may turn out a Waterloo. Good night. I have no vices to warn you against, for you don't seem to be troubled with any—or else you are up to them all, and keep them very dark indeed."

And so saying, Mr. Blunt waved his hand to his body servant, and strode away in the direction of Pall Mall.

The valet paid the coachman five shillings in excess of his fare, at which jarvey drove away rejoicing. His master had flung him his cloak before leaving, saying that he would put on an overcoat, lighter in texture, at his club. Jean Baptiste Constant enveloped himself in this garment, but did not throw it into any melodramatic folds. It ceased to be the mantle of a Byronic-looking patrician. It was now merely the cloak of a highly accomplished gentleman's valet, who knew his cloak and kept it.

"Yes," murmured Monsieur Jean Baptiste Constant very softly to himself, as he walked round the hoarding of those old Mews once occupying the area of Trafalgar-square, but then just in process of demolition, "it may be Austerlitz, and it may be Waterloo—more than Waterloo—it may end in St. Helena and captivity, and death. Ah! je tiens l'enfant. Ah, that dear old nabob at Cutchapore who writes such pretty letters about his little niece. Ah! le beau jeu que le vingt et un. Allons voir la Louve."

It was rather late at night to pay a visit to a she-wolf; but Monsieur Constant seemed bent on the enterprise, and diving into St. Martin's-lane, and through the mazes of Cranbourne-alley, was very soon in Leicester-place, Leicester-square.

CHAPTER VIII. THE HÔTEL RATAPLAN.

I DON'T know what has become of the Hôtel Rataplan in these days. The neighbourhood of "Laycesterre-squarr" is no more exempt from mutability than its Anglo-Saxon vicinage; and Rataplan may have faded into decadence, or undergone an aristocratic change of name, or may have been swept away altogether. It is not a matter of much consequence. I am treating of the year '36; and in '36 the Rataplan flourished exceedingly, and was very much the Hôtel Rataplan indeed.

Désiré Rataplan kept it. He was a gross fat Frenchman. He looked not only a landlord, but a cook; and a capital cook he was. Who lards fat pullets should himself be fat, and Rataplan was larded all over. He was the most unctuous-looking man it is possible to conceive, and his face, like that of many other fat men,

was perfectly pale and colourless. The great art of figure-painters is, I have heard, dexterously to represent flesh that has not an adventitious teint basané in immediate juxtaposition with white linen. For this reason the clumsy painters, when they give us a man or woman dressed in white, usually make the flesh swarthy, or sallow, or sanguinolent. Rubens is considered to have been the only painter who really triumphed over the difficulties of chair contre linge. His successors should have come to the Hôtel Rataplan and studied its proprietor. Rataplan was head cook in his own hotel, and wore the orthodox costume of chef. His jacket, his nightcap, his long apron, his duck trousers, his slippers, were all white, and dirty white. His face and hands were dirty white too, and yet the contrast between his lineaments and his habiliments was marked with satisfactory strength. It was the texture, perhaps, that did it. Otherwise, face and garments were identical. He looked like a pierrot who had grown fat. No, he didn't, he looked like what he was—a cook.

Rataplan's countenance was so seamed and pitted with traces of the small-pox, that his cheeks presented a not remote resemblance to one of his own colanders. He had very little hair, and that was grey, and cropped close to his head à la malcontent, and all but concealed under his nightcap. Not a trace of beard or whisker or moustache, did he show. Perhaps the heat of the fire had dried up the capillary forces, or the steam of many saucepans had acted as a depilatory. He was splashed in many places with ancient gravy, giving him the appearance of a blotted skin of parchment. He wore earrings. He had a thin gold ring on his left hand to tongue; and, strange to tell, Rataplan wore over his heart a discoloured red ribbon sewed on the breast of his jacket, and which he declared to be that of the French Legion of Honour.

"Received from the hand of the Emperor himself on the field of Arcis-sur-Aube," he was accustomed to say. "C'est là que nous avons flanqué une raelée à ces canailles d'Autrichiens. Et les Cosaques! hein! c'est Désiré Rataplan qui leur donna à boire et à manger en 1813. Ma parole d'honneur, je les ai accommodés à toutes sauces ces Cosaques."

He declared that he had the cross of the Legion itself, up-stairs in a box. He had not always been a cook. Désiré Rataplan had served in the Grand Army. He had fought at the Beresina. He had been at Leipsic. He only missed Waterloo because the regiment to which he belonged had been stationed behind the Loire. "Et on m'a appelé brigand de la Loire, moi qui vous parle!" he would say.

His regiment, he stated, was the Trente-septième Légère; but this his hearers would obstinately refuse to believe. That a soldier of the Grand Army should become an hotel-keeper,

or a cook, was no such very astonishing thing; but that so corpulent a man should have served in the light infantry exceeded reason and probability. He endeavoured to reconcile assertion with fact, by stating that he had been drum-major to the Thirty-seventh. But his auditors remained obstinately incredulous. As a sapper and miner, as a heavy cuirassier, as a grenadier of the Old Guard, even, they were willing to accept him; but they declined all credence to his ever having been a "light bob."

He appealed to his wife. "Madame Rataplan was my comrade," he would say. "She was cantinière to the Trente-septième. She gave her own tabatière once to the Emperor, when he was out of snuff. Davoust has taken la goutte from her, over and over again. Monsieur le Prince d'Eckmühl was very partial to Madame Rataplan."

To which, Madame, who was a meek brown little woman, usually habited in a chintz bed-jacket and a petticoat of blue serge, as though she had never had time thoroughly to equip herself in feminine attire after resigning the tunic and pantaloons of a cantinière, would reply: "Tas raison, mon homme. C'est moi-z-aussi qu'a servi le Grand Homme."

They were all frantic in their fanaticism for the memory of the great man. In a dozen rooms of the Hôtel Rataplan, his portrait was hung. There was a plaster statue of him in the hall; an ormolu bust over a clock in the coffee-room. Rataplan would have called his hostelry the Hôtel Napoléon, but for the entreaties of his wife, who represented that the establishment was of so humble a character, that to affix the name of the Great Man to it would be desecration. He did a very comfortable business under the more humble sign of the Hôtel Rataplan, however.

M. Rataplan had two children. Désiré, his son and heir, was away in France, head waiter at Calais, until in the fulness of time it should be his lot to assume the direction of the establishment in Leicester-place. "I should have placed him sous les drapeaux, to serve his country as a soldier," said the paternal Rataplan, "but what is that flag, what is that caricature of the tricolor I see now!

Hélas! soudain tristement il s'écrie :

C'est un drapeau que je ne connais pas.

Ah! si jamais vous vengez la patrie,

Dieu, mes enfants, vous donne un beau trépas!"

He was very fond of quoting Béranger's Vieux Sergent, although he certainly looked much more like the foolish fat scullion in Tristram Shandy, than a relic of the Empire. He had a daughter, Adèle, aged seventeen, whose only duties until she was old enough to be married were, as her parents understood those duties, to keep her eyes cast down, and to divide her time between needlework and the pianoforte. She had a tambour-frame in the office of the hotel, and a

pretty little cottage piano in her own little sitting-room; and she played and sewed and kept her eyes cast down, with exemplary assiduity.

Stay! The list of the family is not quite complete. There was a very large poodle dog by the name of Azor, who in youth had been a sprightly animal, capable of going through the martial exercise and performing numerous other tricks, by means of which poodles have ere this won fame and fortune for their masters, on the public stage. But Azor had grown lazy from long possession of the run of his teeth, in such a land of honey as the kitchen of an hotel. Formerly he used to be shaved, but was now allowed to wear the totality of his shaggy coat, so that he resembled a small Polar bear quite as much as a large poodle.

Finally, there was at the Hôtel Rataplan a prodigious old woman, who was called La Mère Thomas. Nobody could tell with precision who she was. Some said she was Rataplan's grandmother. Others, that she was madame's aunt. She was evidently a kinswoman, for she tutoyed the whole family, called Rataplan mon bichon, and his wife ma biche, and occasionally boxed the ears of Adèle. La Mère Thomas was of immense, but uncertain age. Her complexion was of a fine mahogany colour, and she wore a moustache that might have been envied by many a subaltern in the Life Guards. On her chin, too, there sprouted sundry hairs, which, but for her otherwise jovial appearance, would have given her an uncomfortable family likeness to one of the witches in Macbeth. La Mère Thomas wore a crimson and yellow pocket-handkerchief bound lightly round her head and tied in a bow in front, another silk handkerchief crossed over her ample bosom and tied behind her very much in the style adopted by the engaging damsels resident in the neighbourhood of Ratcliff Highway, a large gold cross at her neck, a skirt of some indescribable fabric and of no colour at all—people said it had originally been a flannel petticoat pieced with a soot-bag—and carpet slippers, like an upholsterer's assistant. She snuffed continually from one of those little tin boxes with a perforated top, like those which are used to keep gentles for fishing in. She was the night porter at the Hôtel Rataplan; and travellers, whom she had let in very late, declared that she habitually smoked a short pipe after two in the morning. Her conversation was not copious. Her English was monosyllabic, and not abundant, although she had been at least ten years in this country. She was a hearty old soul, however, and very fond of beer, which she drank by the quart.

Such was the Rataplan family. They were a good-natured group, all very fond of one another, and quarrelling very seldom: as is the foolish manner with these French people.

The hotel was conducted without the slightest ostentation, but was, nevertheless, a sufficiently prosperous speculation. It was eminently French.

Turning from Leicester-place into the hotel, you might have fancied yourself at once in France—not necessarily in Paris, but in some provincial town. The hall was flagged with the same dirty marble, decorated with the same sham bronzes, and hung with the same array of shrill tinkling bells. The walls were gay with the same highly decorated placards relating to chocolate, corn plasters, bills, elastic corsets, and hotels at Geneva, Lille, Dunkirk—or, continentally elsewhere. There was a little poky office, with pigeon-holes for the lodgers' candlesticks, and numbered plates and hooks for their keys; a green-shaded lamp on the *escritoire*; limp, green, shagreen-covered registers to keep the accounts in; a long low arm-chair covered with Utrecht velvet, for Mademoiselle Adèle; another, higher and black leather covered, for La Mère Thomas. Madame Rataplan was seldom seen in the upper regions. She was, in fact, head chambermaid, her assistant being a dirty Irish girl, with a face like a kidney potato, and many chilblains, who got on very well with the Rataplans principally for the reason that they were all Roman Catholics. The *salle à manger* was a long low room, uncarpeted, and the floor beeswaxed; furnished with the usual array of rush-bottomed chairs, the usual litter of half-emptied wine bottles, dingy napkins in dingier bone rings, knives that wouldn't cut, forks lacking their proper complement of prongs, copies of the *Siècle* and the *Charivari* seven days old, and a big mezzotint engraving after Horace Vernet, representing Napoleon rising from the Tomb. Everything was very French indeed. Everything was very dear indeed. There was a table d'hôte every day at half-past six, at which the cookery was admirable and the wines were detestable. The hotel was generally full of foreigners. The Rataplan clientèle abroad was extensive; and foreign visitors to England were accustomed to declare that, although the hotel accommodation of perfidious Albion was in general execrable, that offered by the Hôtel Rataplan was passable, mais diablement cher. They did not seem to be aware of the possibility of any hotels existing anywhere in London out of Leicester-place, or at least "Lay-cesterre-squarr."

Rataplan, then, prospered. He only kept one waiter: a young man from Alençon, named Antoine, with a red head and a face like a fox. This serviteur appeared by day in a waistcoat with black calico sleeves and baggy pantaloons of blue canvas terminating in stocking feet. At table d'hôte time he attired himself in the black tail-coat and white cravat de rigueur, and carried a serviette in lieu of a feather broom under his arm. He was very good natured, and, save on the question of the reckoning, passably honest. He had taught the Irish servant girl to play piquet with him, and, when any of the lodgers wanted a little quiet gambling, Antoine was always ready with a portable roulette box with an ivory ball. He did not appear to cheat until he was found out.

I have forgotten to state that from basement to roof the Hôtel Rataplan smelt very strongly of tobacco-smoke.

SPORT ON THE NAMELESS FJELD.

TALK of laughing-gas! It is nothing to the effect the bracing air of the Norwegian Fjelds has upon the frame. Whether the amount of oxygen one inhales up there, produces a too great wear-and-tear of the system, is a physiological question I don't feel competent to enter upon; but I incline to think the reverse to be the case, when the quantity of carbon assimilated in the shape of provisions is taken into account.

On the Fjelds a man is always hungry. If ever I were reduced to such straits as to be obliged to devour my shooting-boots, in default of better diet, I could do so up there with greater complacency and relish than elsewhere.

I am what is termed an "old hand" in Norway, and have been in the habit of spending my summers there for a number of years; and when I have had my fill of catching salmon, and of eating them (and when the mosquitoes have had their fill of me), I repair to the Fjelds to pay my attentions to the grouse and reindeer. Norway is the safety-valve for all my ailments. Whether it is the air, or the sea-passage, or the "roughing," or the sharp exercise, certain is it, that when I get back to England, I feel better in body and in mind.

This last year, 1863, our party consisted of four. Tents, canteen, rods, dogs, and guns were all packed up, and we had secured berths on the old Scandinavian.

Let us hasten over that horrid North Sea, and pass over all the troubles to which flesh is heir on a rough passage, as quickly as possible. It was as bright a day as you could wish to see, when we found ourselves on board the "Skibladner" at Eidsvold, the southern end of the beautiful Mjösen Lake. Of course the first thing we did there, was to light our pipes with some of the "Bedste Tabak subter Solem," otherwise called Petum, costing the respectable sum of not quite tenpence the Norwegian pound.

I take it for granted that the Mjösen Lake has been so frequently described, that further remarks on it would be superfluous. So, instead of the scenery, I will devote a few lines to some of our fellow-passengers.

The boat was crowded. St. Hans' Fair in Christiana was just over, and the timber-merchants were returning to their homes from the metropolis. A jolly set of fellows those Bønder were, and, to judge from the quantity of champagne they consumed, I should say, well off. Among our passengers was an English girl, who in company with her elderly parent, was going to fish salmon on the western coast. She wore a felt hat, with a feather stuck in it on one side in the most jaunty manner, and a dark blue yachting jacket with brass buttons and pockets, and a dress of the same material

reaching a little lower than half way down a pair of the neatest legs I ever saw. These dear legs were cased in bright sealing-wax red stockings, shooting boots with brass eyelet-holes, and brass-bound heels. Add to her other charms, that she could "snakke Norsk," and say "Tak," and "Vær saa god," with the prettiest air imaginable.

As she and I were both bound on the same errand, namely, to kill salmon, we soon entered into conversation. She had never fly-fished before, though she averred she could throw a fly pretty well. I was curious to learn how she had acquired the art.

"I used to get Bob, the gardener's boy," she said, "to stand at a respectable distance, and then I would make casts at him till I could touch almost any button on his waistcoat. When I had practised throwing, long enough, I would cry, 'Now, Bob, hook on!' and so Bob fastened the end of his line round a button, and, imagining himself a salmon, rushed off as fast as he could. 'Now, Bob, up stream; now jump!' and then I lower the end of my rod."

"Quite right," I said; "I see you know all about it."

"And then, when we were both fairly out of breath, I would call out, 'Now, Bob, come and be gaffed!' And so ended my morning's practice!"

If there had not been so many spectators, I would have offered my services there and then to act the salmon. I'm sure she could have hooked me easy enough!

There was one old Norwegian on board, and a cynical dog he was. He could speak English pretty well, and seemed rejoiced at having the opportunity of speaking it with a native. The following is the "burthen of his tale" put in better English than he used:

"What a queer lot of fellows you English are," he said, after we had spoken together for a while, "coming all this way to catch fish, and to hunt deer. Besides, you do a wonderful lot of harm to our peasantry."

"How so?" I said. "We pay pretty well for our amusement."

"Much better stay at home," growled my friend. "You are so inconsistent; at one time you overpay, at another you underpay. If some of you are munificent, others are mean and stingy to a degree. Our simple-hearted people can't understand such treatment. You do them as much harm by paying grandly, as by paying meanly."

I could not but acknowledge that there was a truth in his remarks.

"To give you an instance," he added; "last year I met one of your countrymen, and he certainly maintained the character you bear of being a nation of grumblers. At every station at which he stopped, some complaint was entered in the road-book. Now 'he had been kept waiting ten minutes for horses,' or 'he had been charged an exorbitant price for a cup of coffee,' or 'the station-master was an extortionate rascal.' Of course, all these remarks were Hebrew to

the individual denounced, but perhaps they were intended for the benefit of future English travellers. But I was glad to see, on returning by the same route, that some others of your countrymen had felt disgusted at his remarks, for I found at one place, entered below one of his complaints, 'This old grumbler ought to have remained at home;' and at another, 'I have to complain that I found no toothpicks at this station;' and 'Mr. — does not seem to have enjoyed his trip overmuch.'"

"I rather think I know the man you mean," I said.

But now the boat had arrived at Lillehammer, so bidding adieu to our friends, we hastened up to the inn. Early next morning we started for our fishing quarters, where we remained three weeks, meeting with fair success, at the end of which we found ourselves only too glad to go up to what I shall call Nameless Fjeld, where I had had a small shooting-box knocked up. I purposely omit the name of the Fjeld, as I have a great desire to keep this bit of ground to myself. Pardonable selfishness!

It is not my purpose to enter into a detailed account of our manner of living up there. Nor how we feasted like princes on trout, char, ryper, venison, cloud-berries and cream from a neighbouring 'Sæter;' neither will I recount all our sporting adventures, and how Bogus would spend all his time in going after an imaginary bear, which of course he never saw, and which, I believe, nobody ever did see; I will merely recount the deeds of September 4th: a day ever memorable in the sporting annals of Nameless Fjeld.

It was our custom to divide our forces so that only two went out reindeer hunting, while the others remained near home, to pay their attentions to the ryper and ptarmigan, and to catch trout and char, with which the small tarns and "becks" abounded. This day it was Bogus's turn to go reindeer hunting with me. It was as lovely a morning as ever hunter saw, when we left our quarters at four in the morning. We bent our steps to a part of the Fjeld where the other two had seen a large herd of deer the day before, but had been unable to get near them.

After a long and tedious walk, halting every few minutes to sweep the horizon with our glasses, we arrived at the spot where we expected to find them. Not a horn could we see. But there were signs that there had been a large number there only very recently, for we could see where they had been cropping the Alpine ranunculus, their favourite "bonne-bouche." The dog began to sniff about, and, after satisfying himself that there was nothing close by, seemed as if he caught scent of them at a long distance. The boy who accompanied us held him lightly in leash, and we determined to follow him in any direction he might choose. We walked on, perhaps for an hour, when all at once we detected the herd at about three English miles distant.

We could see them quite plainly through our glasses, and counted more than a hundred,

some of them splendid large fellows. As bad luck would have it, there was a large extent of marshy ground to cross before we could get near them. Over this we wormed ourselves along, snake fashion, mostly creeping, but occasionally taking advantage of some huge boulder behind which we could stand up erect with impunity—no small relief after crawling for a couple of hours.

I had calculated we must be within two hundred yards, but when we came to look for them not one of them was to be seen.

"Fine sport this," growled Bogus, in a suppressed tone, and looking savage.

"Glad you think so," was growled back in return, while I was still sweeping the horizon with my glass. "By Jove! there they are! Close beneath us, all lying down. One, two, three. Down! Keep that dog quiet; that old buck smells mischief. Well, they are having their siesta, so I vote we have our 'elevens,' as the servants say at home. We will wait till they get up." The basket was unpacked. I had gone back a little way to get a drink from a clear stream that came bubbling down the Fjeld side, and was stooping down to have a good pull at it, when crack went Bogus's rifle. "Confound the fellow!" I thought, "there's the result of keeping the hammer down; there's an end of our sport." But there he was, standing up and yelling like a mad Indian. Crack went the other barrel. In vain I looked round to see the deer on my flank. But as he was loading again, I hurried up to him. While I had been gone something had startled the animals, he said, and they had suddenly got up. Of course it was absurd to wait for me, so he had taken aim at the nearest buck and fired. He felt sure he had hit, but the smoke had blown back into his eyes, and prevented him from seeing.

"But what made you shriek in that insane manner?" I asked.

"Oh, that was a dodge old 'Ole,' my hunter in Valdres, taught me—at all events, it succeeded, for they all stopped as if terrified, and I know I hit with my second barrel."

"Well! let us see."

At about one hundred and seventy yards from where we had stood, we found two deer lying dead, side by side. The conical bullet had gone through the heart of the first, and pierced the neck of the second, which now lay gasping in the agonies of death.

"Hollo," I cried, "you're in luck to-day—there's another deer lying dead there on your right."

And so there was; his second bullet had also brought down a deer. Three deer in two shots.

"Well! I had better get off home with the lad and send a horse back to take home the quarry, while you remain to flay them," said Bogus the triumphant, after a pull at the flask.

So off he went with the boy, while I proceeded to my task after the most approved fashion. But it was beginning to get late, and a storm was brewing: so after waiting and waiting, I deter-

mined to try and find my way home as well as I could. Piling up stones over the venison, to protect it from the foxes and gluttons, which would otherwise have devoured it, horns and all, I set off, singing, "Tilfelds! tilfelds! hvor den vilde Ren,"—I got no further. Talk of old Scratch, and he is sure to appear. There was a fine old buck not more than fifty yards off. He was standing quite alone; for, late in the season, it is usual for the large bucks to separate from the main herd. I raised my rifle and let fly.

"Meget godt skudt," cried a voice, as the beast gave a salto mortale and fell dead. The man had arrived with the horse, and had witnessed the operation. So, returning to where the other three lay, we placed them on the pony's back, and again started home.

It seemed as if I was destined to have sport that day; for, on descending into a dell, three more deer slowly trotted across my path at a distance of sixty paces. Again did the original savage nature take possession of me, and my rifle covered the leading buck nicely. But—and I have never since regretted it—a feeling came over me that we had committed enough havoc for one day, so I stoically threw up my gun, to the infinite disgust of my companion, who cursed and swore as a Norwegian peasant only can.

It was one in the morning when we arrived at home. I had had nothing to eat all day, for Bogus had forgotten to leave me the provision-bag, so, as may be imagined, I had a ravenous appetite.

"Why, old fellow," said he, "we thought you were lost, and as the trout were nicely done, it was a pity to spoil them by waiting for you in vain."

"Always thoughtful!" I replied; "but make yourself useful for once, and get me something to eat, if you don't wish me to begin on you. Then for a pipe, and the grog. And then I'll tell you all about it." And I recounted to them my adventures, as I have done here, and I put a white mark against Sept. 4 in my journal.

MY ACCOUNT WITH HER MAJESTY.

I NEVER laid by a penny till the Post-office Savings-banks came up. Not that I mightn't have done so, for I earned good wages, and after paying all the expenses at home, I had always plenty of loose cash to spend. I was never without money in my pocket; but always at the year's end I had spent all I had received. I knew very well that I might have saved a good bit, without cutting down the weekly allowance to the missus for the house, or stinting myself of any reasonable enjoyment; but I had never begun the thing, and when I thought about doing it, I was at a loss how to go about it. What I used to do, when I had a little lump of money over and above the expenses, was to put it away in a drawer, and lock it up; and I used to say to myself, "I won't touch that money, but I'll put more to it from time to time, and

when it amounts to a hundred, I'll do something with it—put it in the bank, or invest it in a building society, or something of that sort." But, somehow, the money didn't grow as I expected. You see, I always had the key of that drawer in my pocket, and at any time, if I ran a little short, through being rather free with my mates or going upon the spree, I had nothing to do but go to the drawer and help myself. I hesitated over it sometimes, but never for long; the drawer was so handy, and I used to say to myself, "If I take a sovereign it won't reduce the money much, and I can put it back again next week. But it generally happened when next week came that it wasn't convenient to put the money back. And so I went on going to the drawer for sovereigns and half-sovereigns, until the bit of money dwindled down so low that it wasn't worth keeping. It's the same with drink. If you make up your mind that you won't taste a drop for a week, and stick to it, you are all right; but only be persuaded to make a beginning—to take one glass, just one, and you take another and another, and then it's all wrong. It's the same, too, I dare say, with swindling and robbing your master: once make a beginning, and on you go, like rolling down One-Tree-hill on Whit-Monday, the further you go, the faster you go.

Susan used to say to me, "George, how's the money getting on?" And she used to say it in a sly, sarcastic sort of way, meaning that I was spending it, and that it was going very fast. I know it was, but I didn't like to acknowledge it, and always said: "Oh! it's all right in the drawer, there, what's of it." "Well, George," she would say, "you put away ten pounds about a month ago, and as Christmas is coming on, it will enable us to buy all we require, and give a little party to our friends." "Yes," I would say, "but you know, my dear, that I have had to pay So-and-so, and So-and-so;" and then I'd name certain bills, and the subscription to my lodge—for I'm an Odd Fellow—and add it up and subtract it from the ten, and Susan, not being good at figures, would be quite puzzled, and give the sum up in despair. But she found me out more than once. One day, when I came home to dinner, she says to me, "George," she says, "you left the key of the drawer on the mantelshelf this morning." She didn't look at me, but went on carving the boiled rabbit. My wife is odd that way, and not like the generality of women. Nagging is not one of her faults. She doesn't say much, but she thinks the more. So, when she told me about the key in that quiet way, I knew she had been to the drawer and counted the money. That's where I don't hold with Bluebeard. He might have tried his wife with anything but a secret; it is downright unreasonable to expect a woman not to be curious. I merely said "Oh!" in an indifferent kind of a way; but I am sure my looks convicted me. However, Susan did not make any remark about the money being nearly all gone, but, by-and-by,

when she was helping me to a suety dumpling, she says in her usual demure way, "Don't you think, George, it would be a good thing to put a little money away in the savings-bank?" "Well," I says, "it wouldn't be a bad thing, Susan." "No," she says, "I'm sure it wouldn't, and if I was you I would make a beginning." "Well," I says, "I would, if I knew how to go about it." "There's no difficulty about that," Susan says; "you've only to go to Welbeck-street, and put a little in, and they'll give you a book, and there you are." "Very well, Susan," I says, "I'll take your advice, and go to Welbeck-street to-morrow."

I was as good as my word, and next day, at the dinner-hour, I walked up to Welbeck-street to put in three pound ten, which was all that was left of the fifteen. But, lo and behold! when I got to the bank it was shut, and for the moment I thought it had broke, or the manager bolted with the funds, or something; but on looking about I noticed a brass-plate on the wall with information about the bank hours, and from that I learned that the bank was only open three days a week, from ten to two in the morning, and from six to eight in the evening. I had come on the wrong day. I was a good bit vexed to have all my trouble for my pains, but Susan, when I told her, took it quite quiet, and says, "Never mind, George, you can go again on Saturday, when the bank is open." Well, I fully resolved to go, and on Saturday morning I took the money with me, intending to walk over to the bank after my work. However, just as I was leaving the shop at six o'clock, who should I meet but an old mate of mine, that I hadn't seen for years. Nothing would do for Dave but I must go and have a glass with him. Well, you know, you can't refuse to drink with a mate, especially when he's been away in Birmingham for ever so long, and got a holiday on purpose to come up and see his friends. So in we goes to the Yorkshire Grey and has a glass of rum-and-water each, and you know how the time slips away when old friends meet as have been long parted. Dave had so much to tell me about Birmingham gun-barrels, and I had so much to tell Dave about Clerkenwell watchsprings, and one thing followed another, including glasses of rum-and-water, that it was a quarter to eight in no time. It was no use; I couldn't get to Welbeck-street in a quarter of an hour unless I took a cab, and it didn't seem natural like to take a cab to go to a savings-bank with three pound ten: so I stopped with Dave and had another glass.

When I went home and told Susan, she didn't say an angry word, but just remarked that I was very unlucky. You don't know how aggravating Susan is in that way. I'd rather have tongue-pie a good deal, than that sit-and-say-nothing, but think-the-more way of hers. It's more aggravating than saying the thing right out; for you can't tell what an awful character a quiet woman *thinks* you are. For my part, I'd rather have teacups. However, I was resolved to show Susan that I was in

earnest, and on the following Tuesday I got to the bank in good time. I didn't find it such an easy matter though, to put my money away, even now when I was there with it in my hand. There was such a lot of people in the bank that there was no getting near the counter for full a quarter of an hour, and when at last I did get to it, the clerks didn't seem inclined to take any notice of me. Two or three times I said to one of them that I wanted to put in three pound ten, but he paid no attention, and always turned to somebody else. An old woman with half-a-crown cut me out first, and then I was elbowed aside by a charity-boy with a shilling all in coppers. They were regular customers, and used to the banking business, I suppose, and I wasn't. However, I got it in at last and received my book, and I do assure you I felt a load taken off my mind. When I showed the book to Susan, she said, "That's right, George, and I hope you'll go on with it." I fully intended to do so then; but it's easy to intend, and not so easy to carry your intendings out. It's like sitting over a fire on a winter's night, and saying, "I'll get up early to-morrow morning and do overtime;" but when the morning comes, and you peep out between the clothes and see the frost upon the windows, it's very easy to find an excuse for lying a little longer.

The evening song and the morning song don't often agree. So it was with my saving. I had always a pretty lively recollection of the trouble it was to walk all the way to Welbeck-street after my day's work, and then to have to push my way through a crowd of old women, and wait my turn at the counter. It's not worth doing for a few shillings, I used to say to myself; I'll wait until there's more of it, and then put it in a lump. So I put the shillings away in the drawer until such time as they should grow to be pounds; but owing to the key being always handy they didn't, and what with club-nights and speers now and then, it never came to be enough to be worth while taking down to Welbeck-street. When Christmas-time came, all I had in the bank was the three pounds ten I first put in. However, that was something, and as I was rather short just then, it would come in handy to get the Christmas extras. Three days before Christmas I went down to the bank to draw the money out, promising Susan to come straight home with it. You may judge how mad I was, when the clerk told me that I couldn't draw the money out without giving a week's notice. Here was a pretty go; Susan at home waiting for the money to get in the tea and sugar, the plums and currants, and what not, and the cash not to be got until after Christmas. "This sort of saving won't suit me," says I to myself; "there's too much ceremony about it." I had to borrow the money from one of my mates to get the Christmas dinner, and at the end of the week I drew my money out of Welbeck-street, and paid him back; and that was the end of my account at that savings-bank.

Next year, Susan belonged to a pudding-club

at the grocer's, and I belonged to a goose-club at the Yorkshire Grey. We began to pay in sixpence a week very shortly after Midsummer, and, a few days before Christmas, Susan brought home a parcel of groceries, and I got a goose, and a bottle of gin, and a bottle of rum. We didn't miss the money paid every week in sixpences, and when the things came home, they seemed like a gift. I said to Susan that I thought this was better than putting money in the savings-bank, where there was so much ceremony, and Susan thought so too. But when Susan's brother, John, who is a cashier at a large linendraper's, came to dinner on Christmas-day, and we told him how we had been saving, he burst out a-laughing. "What are you laughing at?" I says. "What am I laughing at?" he says, almost choking himself with a mouthful of goose—"why, at you." "What for," I says. "For being so jolly green," he says. "Jolly green!" I says; "is it jolly green to lay by money for a rainy day?—leastways, for Christmas-day, when a family requires extras?" "Fiddlesticks!" John says. "Let me ask you a question, George." "Twenty," I says; "go ahead, John." "Well," he says, "when did you begin to pay into the goose-club at the Yorkshire Grey?" "At Midsummer," I says. "And you paid in sixpence every week for twenty-six weeks?" "Yes," I says, "I did." "Which made thirteen shillings, George?" "Exactly," I says. "Well," he says, "is the goose and the liquor worth it?" "Judge for yourself, John," I says. "Could I have bought such a goose as that you are now partaking of for less than eight-and-six in the shops?" "No," he says, "I don't think you could." "Very well," I says, "where's your fiddlesticks, and how do you make me out jolly green?" "Why this way, George," he says: "in the first place, you've been losing the interest upon your money for six months." "That's not much," I says. "No," he says, "perhaps not; but that's not all. I'll be bound to say, George, if you'll only be candid enough to confess it, that every time you went to the Yorkshire Grey to pay in sixpence to the goose-club, you had a glass of something?" "I don't deny it," I says; "you can't well go to a public-house without having a glass." "Sometimes two," he says. "Well," I says, "sometimes two; perhaps three, when I happened to meet a friend." "Then, let us say, George, that every time you went to pay in sixpence to the club, you spent, on an average, another sixpence on drink." "It might be about that," I says. "Very well then, George, upon your own showing, your goose, and bottle of gin, and bottle of rum, have cost you six-and-twenty shillings, to say nothing of your loss of time, and the injury to your constitution through drinking more than was good for you." "I never thought of it in that way, John," I says. "No, of course not, George," he says; "for if you had thought of it in that way, you wouldn't have been such a fool as to do it." "But you'll admit," I says, "that Susan has

had her money's-worth at the grocer's, and not paid more than she ought?" "I'm not going to dispute that," he says; "but you must remember that the grocer has had the use of her money, and supposing he had failed about the beginning of December, what would have become of Susan, and all the other Christmas-club geese? I'm surprised at a sensible man like you, George, doing such things, when there's a Post-office Savings-bank close to your door." "But," I says, "there's so much ceremony about savings-banks; they're only open certain days a week, and the hours are inconvenient for a working man, and—" "You don't know anything about them, George," he says, taking me up short; "for the Post-office Savings-banks that have just come up are open every day from ten to four, and you may put money in, and draw it out, whenever you like." "Well, John," I says, "I'll see about it."

I did see about it, and found that one of the Post-office banks had been opened at Bardsley's, the tea-grocer's, in the next street. Bardsley's is our post-office and money-order office as well; and walking up the shop through an avenue of sugar-loaves, I found a clerk reading the newspaper.

"I want to put some money in the new bank," I says.

The clerk never said a word, but placed a printed paper before me to sign. I read it over and signed it, thereby declaring that I was not directly or indirectly entitled to any deposit in that, or any other savings-bank, and that I submitted myself to the rules of the Post-office Savings-bank. The clerk then handed me a small paper book, about the size of a penny memorandum-book, only it had a white cover with the royal arms at the top, and was printed all over with rules and regulations.

"Sign your name on that line, across the inside of the cover," the clerk says. I signed it. "That's your signature," he says, "for drawing out, and you should be particular always to use the same one."

I then handed the clerk five shillings as my first deposit. He took the money, wrote in the book, "Number 857. 1862. Jan. 1. — 5," put the post-office letter stamp for the day against the entry, and the thing was done. I don't think I was more than five minutes in the shop altogether. The very next evening, when Susan and I were sitting at supper, the postman came to the door. Susan answered him, and came back with a letter in her hand. "Lor', George," she says, "it's a letter, 'On Her Majesty's Service;' whatever can it be about? I shouldn't wonder if it was the water-rates, for you know the man has called three times, and—"

"There, let's open it," I says, "that's the best way to find out what it's about. It's all right, Susan," I says; "it's a letter from the Postmaster-General." "And whatever does he want?" Susan says. "Oh, nothing," I says; "he only writes to say that five shillings have been placed to my credit in the books of his

department." "Well, it's very condescending of him," Susan says, "for so little." "Well," I says, "it's a guarantee that it's all right, and there's his signature, 'Geo. Chetwynd.'" "Cheatwind!" Susan says; "are you sure it's all safe, George?" "Safe as the bank," I says, "and safer; for the Queen, the two Houses of Parliament, and all the taxes, are security."

I quite took a fancy to the Post-office Savings-bank when I found how simple the machinery was. It was almost as handy as the drawer, to have a bank round the corner where you could buy your tea and sugar, and put your money away all at once, and without ceremony. I was as pleased with it as a child with a pretty toy, and I liked the importance of receiving letters every now and then "On Her Majesty's Service." Susan used to put the letters on the chimney-piece for people to see. It was soon the talk of the neighbourhood that I was holding a correspondence with the government, and it was reported that I was going to be appointed watchmaker to the Queen and the royal family. I passed the post-office twice every day on coming home to dinner and going back again to work, and to walk in with my book and put away a few shillings, was just like dropping in to the public-house to have a glass of ale. And always the next day, whether it was pounds or shillings, I had a letter "On Her Majesty's Service;" and Susan would meet me at the door and say, "George, here's another letter from the Queen," and then we'd sit down after supper and count it up, and see how much I had at my banker's. I found putting money away in the Post-office Savings-bank so easy and so pleasant like, that I rather overdid the thing, and put more money away than I could spare. So one day I ran short, and had to draw out. It was almost as easy and expeditious as drawing a cheque upon one of the big banks. At the post-office they gave me a slip of paper with a form of withdrawal upon it, and addressed in print to the Postmaster-General on the back. I had nothing to do but fill in the number of my book, the amount I wanted to draw out, sign my name, double the bit of paper up, and shove it in the post. It only took me about a minute, for the paper was ready gummed for sealing, and no stamp was required, it being marked on the back, "On Her Majesty's Service." It was two o'clock on Tuesday when I posted the letter. At four o'clock next day I had an answer in the shape of a printed form, very similar to the notice paper. I had nothing to do but sign it and present it at the post-office, and the money was handed to me, the clerk marking off the withdrawal in my book.

It's my belief that saving is a habit, like smoking, or taking snuff, or like extravagance. If you begin it and go on with it for a little time, you come to have a sort of passion for it. Whenever I had any spare cash, I was off to Bardsley's with it, and often when I thought of withdrawing some I didn't do it, saying to myself, "Oh, I can give notice to-morrow, or the next day, or any time I like;" and so perhaps I

waited and tided over the temporary difficulty, and didn't withdraw at all.

About the beginning of December, in 'Sixty-three, when I went to put in three pounds, the clerk wouldn't take it. "What's up," I says; "going to stop?" "No," he says; "but if you look at the rules and regulations in your book, you'll find that you ain't allowed to put in more than thirty pounds a year." That, I believe, is to protect the regular bankers, and it may be quite right, but I don't exactly see it. I know this, that before the new year, when I might begin to put in again, I had blewed that three pound which the clerk wouldn't take. If it did any good to the regular bankers, it certainly didn't do any good to me. However, at the end of 'sixty-three, I had fifty pounds at the Post-office Savings-bank, and I might have had sixty, only I took a holiday in August, and went down with Susan for a week to Margate, where we were rather free. And here I found out another advantage of this wonderful Post-office bank. Susan and I went boating, and raffling, and driving in chaises, and ran short, and were likely to be in a fix, until I looked over the rules and regulations in my bank-book, when I learned that I might withdraw my money at any Post-office Savings-bank in the kingdom, by giving notice to that effect. So I sent up the usual notice of withdrawal to London—I keep a dozen of them stitched together in a cover, and call it my cheque-book—stating that I wanted to withdraw the money at the post-office at Margate; and, almost by return, back came the withdrawal paper, and I had nothing to do but go to the post-office and get it cashed. And the forms don't cost you a farthing; there's no postage to pay, and when the time comes for you to send up your book to the chief office in London for the interest at two and a half per cent to be calculated and added to your account—which is the anniversary of the day on which the first deposit was made—the Postmaster-General sends you a big envelope for the purpose.

Altogether, it's the best regulated thing I ever came across, and if it doesn't make people save, nothing will. But it does, I'm sure. Look at Bardsley's shop now, to what it was. Why, that little box with the pigeon-hole, where they used to do the post-office order business, has swollen into a great banking department, and there's Bardsley himself, with a clerk to help him, at it all day long, with piles of bank-notes and bowls full of sovereigns beside them—just like Twining's, or the Bank of England itself. Bardsley's proud of it, too; I know he is. He's never behind the counter now, serving tea and sugar; he leaves that to his young men; he's a banker, bless you.

I don't believe I should ever have saved anything if these Post-office Savings-banks hadn't come up; and I'm sure if it was generally known how handy and convenient they are, thousands like myself would take advantage of them, and soon learn to be careful and provi-

dent. If there's a philanthropist that's hard up for an object, I don't know what he could do better than go about distributing tracts setting forth the rules and regulations and advantages of the Post-office Savings-banks.

AMONG PIRATES.

My friend MICHAEL ANDERSEN, late carpenter of that ill-fated bark the FLOWERY LAND, is a man of few words. These being, for the most part, Norwegian, he has a certain difficulty in making his sentiments clearly intelligible to the British mind, and this difficulty is enhanced by the effect produced upon the poor fellow's nervous system, both by the murderous scenes he has witnessed, and his subsequent compulsory association of three weeks with the piratical gang who had murdered the captain and others, and seized the ship. Nevertheless, in the course of an hour's visit he lately paid me, with reference to obtaining a passage back to Christian-sand, Michael related enough to make his experience worth recording in the "story of our lives from year to year."

It is no exaggeration to say that, for the whole period I have mentioned—three weeks—the man's life hung upon a hair. In his condensed evidence given at the recent trial, Andersen stated that while standing at the top of the cuddy-stairs, and bending over the mangled body of the mate, he was himself struck with a handspike on the back of the neck. This blow, which struck him half senseless down the steps, a fall of six feet, was no doubt intended to have been deadly. Lighting upon the neck and shoulder, it only occasioned him a few days' stiffness and pain, and warned him of the critical tenure on which he retained his life.

There seems to have been little general intercourse among the polyglot crew, but, fortunately for Andersen, he had established a sort of friendship with one of the Manilla miscreants—Lyons—who ultimately came forth as the leading spirit of the murderous conspiracy. To this man's persistent interposition, Andersen, the second mate, and the boy Early, were unquestionably indebted for their lives.

Of these three, my friend Michael stood in the most imminent peril. The second mate was needed to navigate the vessel. The boy—a reserved and timid lad—was held in contempt. No carpenter was needed, and the very appearance of poor Andersen at any part of the ship gave such umbrage to the mutineers, that, in spite of the opposition of his friend "Joe Lyons," as he called him, no day passed without its being resolved to kill him before its close. So long as "Joe Lyons" was present, Michael was comparatively safe. The ticklish part of it was to survive during his patron's unavoidable disappearances. To facilitate this process, the latter imparted every day to his friend a regular lesson in deportment, suggested by the existing

feeling of each individual miscreant respecting him.

"Keep clear of Lopez, *this* watch," Lyons would say; "if Santos or Marsalino speaks to you, don't look so cursedly sulky; *they're* all right just now. Fling that knife overboard, you (something'd) booby! Do you want it in your own ribs? Now, mind this; if you see Blanco lounging about you with his hands in his pockets, sheer wide of him, d'ye hear? Don't go below for a moment to-day; they don't like it. Keep out of all dark places, and, when I'm on deck, take your snooze."

Such—though not conveyed in that precise language—were some of the directions Michael had daily to observe, and were sent well home to his memory by the supplementary information his instructor had almost always to add—that his life was to be taken that day, should the slightest pretext be afforded, and that even the manner of the deed, by knife, handspike, slung shot, or flinging overboard, had been decided on.

With wits sharpened by this intelligence, Michael did, under a merciful Providence, weather the dangerous storm: preserved, as we know, to aid materially in the conviction of the merciless band, even of him who saved him; but whose conduct, with this exception, unhappily, presented no other feature of extenuation.

According to Michael, this deed of piracy and murder—one of the foulest in our annals—had its origin solely in cupidity. The vessel, a well-found bark, of about five hundred tons, had more than the usual number of hands on board. The crew were all, with one or two exceptions, practised seamen, who knew their duty, and, in spite of the variety of languages, did it well.

The unfortunate captain, Michael declared, "was a very nice man." So also was the captain's brother, who had been a master carpenter, and in whose employ Michael had purposed to remain, at Singapore.

There was, according to Michael, little or no ground for discontent on board—some occasional harshness of expression on the part of the captain not being worth taking into account—but an impression had got about among the men that the ship's freight included a quantity of specie. It appears to have been a fact that the captain had with him certain bags of medals, or metal counters, burnished to look like sovereigns, and worth about a penny each. The sale of these impostors, in many parts of the metropolis, but especially near the river, is so common as to run no risk of deceiving the most innocent purchaser. Nevertheless, to their unlucky presence in the "*Flowery Land*," was probably due the catastrophe which befel that unfortunate ship.

Poor Michael, after all his dangers and escapes—not to mention the assistance he afforded in bringing the criminals to justice—ran some risk of perishing by starvation in liberal England. He was indeed paid for his

attendance as a witness; and, while so engaged, was provided with a lodging at the house of a policeman; but, the trial over, he was turned adrift; and had it not been for the refuge offered by the Sailors' Home, and the kindness of a charitable gentleman who was present at the trial, would have been left in a state of actual destitution: his clothes, money, box of tools, &c., having gone down with the scuttled ship. As the vessel was insured for four or five thousand pounds, it might have been imagined that the owners would have taken the poor man's case into their consideration.

Narrow as Michael Andersen's escape has been, it was even surpassed in narrowness by that of a gentleman—Mr. S.—to whom a most extraordinary adventure occurred about twenty-five years since, but which, never finding a place in the Annual or other registers of the time, may scarcely be remembered.

Mr. S., who had held an appointment in India, and married, while there, a half-caste Malay lady of great beauty, embarked with his wife at Singapore, on board a large country ship of eleven or twelve hundred tons burden. In the same vessel were placed a large number of Chinese convicts, going to fulfil their respective sentences at different depôts. Now, instead of providing for these desperadoes a regular escort, it pleased the authorities to assemble a sort of "*scratch*" pack, composed of Sepoys, pensioned and returning home, and of men who *had* been policemen, but who no longer were.

They had been but a few days at sea, when Mr. S. was awakened one night by a disturbance on deck, and, rushing up, found a regular battle going on between the convicts (who had risen) and their inefficient guard: apparently to the disadvantage of the latter. Mr. S. quickly returned to his cabin, and was groping for his arms, when the captain rushed in, fired his pistol through the skylight, and crying out that the Chinese were masters of the ship, darted up the steps, threw himself overboard, and was drowned.

A few minutes of suspense followed, when a party of convicts came below, and, without molesting Mrs. S., ordered her husband on deck. Compelled to obey, he found the deck deluged with blood, and the victorious convicts compelling the survivors of the British crew and Sepoys to "*walk the plank*."

Presently, it came to Mr. S.'s turn. Instead, however, of falling at once into the sea, he, with great muscular efforts, clung to the plank, and refused his fate. In vain the murderers tried to prod him with pikes. He dodged their points successfully, until, at length, a Chinese, creeping forward on the plank, aimed a blow at him with a sabre. In avoiding the stroke, Mr. S. lost his hold, and fell into the sea.

It was midnight, the sea was full of sharks, Mr. S. could not swim a stroke, the ship was in complete possession of the convicts, a thousand miles from land. Could any position seem more hopeless? Yet Mr. S. lived to relate the story

at a London dinner-party to a friend of the writer's.

In falling, he caught a rope towing overboard. By this he hung, invisible, hearing successive victims fall, and distinguishing between the dead and living bodies, by the absence, in the former case, of the last frantic struggle for existence. At length, his chilled fingers lost hold of the rope; but, at that instant, it occurred to him that he had heard it affirmed that if one who could not swim would only throw himself boldly on his back, keeping his head well down, he might float for an indefinite period. He did so, and floated; but every now and then his legs would sink lower and lower, till at length one of them struck a hard substance. Strange as it may appear, it is a positive fact that he had unconsciously drifted into one of the ship's boats, which, half submerged, was towing astern. Once aware of his position, he was able to support himself without difficulty till morning broke, when he was discovered, brought on deck, and, to his utter astonishment, allowed to go to his cabin unmolested; not, however, until he had seen the unfortunate English mate, who had taken refuge in the rigging, brought down, hamstrung, and left to bleed to death.

The ship was now put about; and, under the charge of a native pilot, who had been spared for the purpose, shaped her course for China. Mr. S. was confined to his cabin, and though, naturally, a prey to considerable anxiety, was relieved from any immediate fear of death, inasmuch as one or other of his captors came every day to inquire what he would like for dinner!

In due time land was sighted, a bold headland, round which the pilot declared they must steer, although there presently appeared also a broad fine channel, dividing the headland from the mainland. In spite of the man's repeated assurance that this was full of rocks, the Chinese, doubting his good faith, compelled him to lay what seemed to them the shorter course and enter the channel. Scarcely had they done so when the ship stranded. A hasty council was held, at which it was resolved that half the party should escape to land, sending back the boats for the other half, who should then follow their comrades, having first murdered Mr. and Mrs. S., and fired the ship.

The former part of the programme was duly executed, and the boats were returning, when the three masts of a British sloop of war became visible, not a mile distant. She had seen the course of the devoted ship, and, knowing what must ensue, gave chase to pick up the pieces. Her boats were already out, and no sooner came within hail than Mr. S. made known the state of affairs. In a moment, the Chinese were on their knees praying for their prisoners' intercession. The sloop's boats, properly armed, went ashore and captured every individual of those who had landed. The whole were reconveyed to Singapore, and probably not the least remarkable feature of the remarkable story is, that for some reason best known to themselves, the jury could

not be induced to award against the actors in that cruel deed of piracy and murder any other verdict than "manslaughter!"

FAIR DENMARK.

Most people have their Ultima Thule on the map, beyond which all is shadowy twilight, *terre incognitæ*, peopled by *ichthyophagi*, *anthropophagi*, or "men whose heads do grow beneath their shoulders." "Spain's an island," said one of the lights of the harem. To the general reader, as well as to the general traveller, Denmark, as a whole, is an unknown region, beginning with its entrance-hall (by land), the Duchy of Holstein.

The portal to the Danish kingdom for visitors from Western Europe (still by land) is Hamburg, a city unique after its kind—a Babel without its tower, a Babylon without its fall. Other towns and other provinces have bowed their heads to monarchic sceptres; Hamburg retains its ancient constitution and its privileges as a free city. Its burgomaster still bears the title of magnificent, and its senators have a right to be addressed as their wisdoms. Amidst the confusion of tongues which stuns the ear, the language of trade is universally understood; "money" is the password from one end of the town to the other. The Hamburgian babies learn to lisp it soon after they come into the world, the old men mutter it in their dreams before lying down to take their final sleep. They are prudent, and would give offence to no man. Once upon a time, a journalist had the boldness to state that French gunpowder was better than Prussian. The censor of the press struck out the sentence, seeing that Prussia cannot be supposed to be, in any respect, inferior to France. Another writer translated a speech of the King of Sweden, in which he mentioned Asiatic cholera. The word "Asiatic" had to be suppressed, because Russia might take umbrage at it. Despite all which, the men of Hamburg are honourable, amiable, hospitable, and will honour a letter of introduction as readily as a bill of exchange.

Almost touching Hamburg, is Altona, the capital of Holstein, the second city of the Danish dominions, and the dullest in the universe. It rivals London, nevertheless, in having a handsome street called Pallmail. The scenery of Holstein, without aspiring to the picturesque, is pleasing in its character. The farms, with their neat hedges or low stone fences, have almost an English look. Gentle knolls occur now and then, interspersed with little sheets of water. The clumps of beech around these small lakes are vocal with the nightingale. In general, there is little wood; but wherever it occurs, from its consisting of trees with glossy foliage, it tells well in the landscape.

In fact, the land is a very good land. The neatness of its little towns is very striking. Of these, Braunsted and Neumunster are worthy of especial mention. With their pavements as

accurate as mosaic, houses of bright compact brick, avenues of elms forming sheltered walks from end to end, and streets delightfully clean, they greatly remind the traveller of the highly-polished little towns of Holland.

The system pursued in filling up vacant clerical charges is, as nearly as can be, that of uncontrolled popular election. The parishioners meet at the church on a day of which due intimation has been given by the ecclesiastical judicatory of the district. The only inhabitants of the parish who do not attend on these occasions are the proprietors of the larger estates; they absent themselves lest they should be suspected of influencing their tenants in behalf of some particular preacher. The candidates are generally those young clergymen of the neighbourhood with whose pulpit ministrations the people are best acquainted. The names of these being duly proposed, every male parishioner who has received the sacrament votes for the person he prefers, and the appointment is given to him who unites the greatest number of voices. The system appears to work well, there. There are few instances of serious divisions among the people, and as few in which the best qualified candidate is not selected.

Pretty little Kiel, in a snug baylet on the north coast of Holstein, receives, if not its vitality, at least a great part of its animation, from the fresh blood which flows through it in the shape of strangers. The steamers arriving from Copenhagen import objects of constant interest. Faces are seen in its peaceable streets which nobody has ever seen before, and dialects are heard whose interpretation would puzzle its learned university: which university, by the way, includes imprisonment amongst its modes of discipline. He is no myth, that travelling student of dramatic notoriety, who, when asked by country acquaintances where he resided, frankly gave his address, "at the University Prison, Heidelberg."

But Kiel is best known to German idlers from its attractions as a watering-place, notwithstanding the rivals it has to contend with. Cuxhaven, Nordeuci, and Heligoland. But though these rivals stand on the North Sea, whose waters are reckoned more restorative than those of the Baltic, yet Kiel attracts a fair proportion of the thousands who annually flock from all parts of Germany to some other part of Fatherland.

Holstein, for its present annoyance, is the joint which unites to the great German body the long straggling arm known as Continental Denmark. The little duchy, hitherto best known for its agricultural fame, holds also a conspicuous place in the annals of the royal houses of Europe. Its princely line has given kings to most of the thrones of the north, and if they all begin to squabble about it, there is no knowing where the quarrel will end. A different supply consists of cart-horses, the Holstein breed maintaining its reputation as amongst the fittest for draught in the world. The dairies are also in high repute. There are farms in the neighbour-

hood of Kiel where a couple of hundred cows are kept, and in whose storerooms a thousand cheeses, ready for export, may be seen at one time. Though Kiel is somewhat sunk from its importance as the capital of the Gottorp portion of Holstein (formerly belonging to the imperial family of Russia), yet, in consequence of a brisk commerce and some manufacturing spirit, the inhabitants have long been reputed wealthy.

On doubling the Point of Falster, after leaving Kiel, the steamer takes you between Zealand and an archipelago of islands scattered about on either side—poor little islets scarcely rising above the water's edge, covered with scanty grass and a few hovels, whose peasant inhabitants lead a life much akin to that passed on shipboard. The wind dashes the spray of the waves against their huts. The sea roars by day around the family table, and by night beneath the pillows on which they sleep. The sea is their element, their delight, and their sorrow, their wide world, their boundary. Casting their nets therein, they reap their harvests.

It is a popular tradition that some of these islets were made by enchanters, who wished for greater facilities of going to and fro, and dropped them in the sea as stations on their way. At certain spots they are so close to each other that the sea no longer resembles a sea, but a mighty river like the Rhine. You distinguish the shore on either side; you can count the dwellings; and on Sundays, when the boat runs along the coast of Falster, you can hear the bells, and can respond to the hymns chanted inside the churches.

A little further on, the natives will take you to the prow of the vessel and point with pride to a tall white mass of rock surmounted by several sharp peaks, and crowned with trees. What a geologist would call calcareous rock, is not a rock, but a beautiful young fairy who reigns over the island and its surrounding waters. The naked cliff is her white robe, which falls in graceful folds to the sea, and is diapered by the glancing sunbeams. The pointed pyramid is her sceptre, and the belt of wood her diadem. From the summit of the Dronnings Stol (the Queen's Seat), she surveys her empire and protects the fisherman's barque as watchfully as the merchant vessel. Thus does the popular imagination poetise material objects. Passing along the shores of a lake, it hears the water-sprites singing in their grottoes, and beholds the mermaids rising to the surface. Gazing at a hill of chalk, it discovers a queen there, and calls it the Moensklint (the Maiden's Rock). At Moensklint the sea resumes its open character, and the coast of Kiøge almost seems to retreat, to make way for the vessels which incessantly pass. Thence to Copenhagen the sea is covered with ships. Here, as elsewhere, the Baltic coast is full of traditions, some impressed with true religious feeling, others bearing the trace of paganism.

In these islets everybody is acquainted with the history of elves and giants, with magic swords, and treasures guarded by dragons. They are the resort

of mermen, with green beards and hair like seaweed streaming over their shoulders, who sing at evening amongst the breakers to entice the maidens, and bear them off to their crystal grotts. They hide sorcerers who, by force of enchantments, raise tempests to wreck the boats of the fishermen, against whom they bear a grudge. They have ghastly huntsmen, condemned for their crimes to an endless chase through thicket and marsh. Priest Island recalls a saintly legend. There dwelt on it a priest named Anders, revered by every one on account of his virtues. He was very poor, being possessed of one penny only. But when he wanted anything, he sent his penny to the dealer or the labourer, who invariably and devoutly returned it, with the addition of the thing required. The island still retains its name, but has, unfortunately, lost the marvellous penny.

At another part of the coast, a church sunk to the bottom of the sea, after being profaned by impious men. By night, you may hear the unhappy wretches chant the penitential psalms, intermingled with sobs and wailings. When the sea is calm, you may see through the transparent waves the lighted candles before the altar. For their sins, they are condemned to bitter imprisonment in this sunken church until the day of judgment.

In the same neighbourhood, the sailors have often beheld, in the midst of tempests and by the glare of lightning, a strange built vessel hoisting an unknown flag. The captain and his crew one day committed a great crime; and they are to wander over the waves, without halt or repose, till the end of the world. When these poor maritime wandering Jews perceive another vessel at a distance, they send off to it letters for their relations and friends. But the letters are addressed to persons who have not existed for centuries, and to streets with names known to no living creature.

In Falster Island there was once a very rich woman who had no children. Wishing to devote her fortune to pious uses, she built a church, which, when finished, appeared in her eyes so beautiful, that she felt herself entitled to ask a recompense. She therefore prayed to be permitted to live as long as her church should stand. Her desire was granted. Death passed before her door without entering it. He knocked at the doors of all her relations and friends, but did not show her so much as the tip of his scythe. She lived unscathed through all the wars, through all the plagues and pestilences, through all the famines which ravaged her country. She lived so long, that she had nobody left to talk with; for she always talked of such ancient times and ways that nobody could understand her. But when she asked for extension of life, she forgot to ask for a continuation of youth and middle age. She received what she begged for and no more. She grew older and older. She lost her strength, her sight, her hearing, and her speech. She then had herself shut up in an oaken coffer and carried to the church. Once a year, at Christmas, she recovers the use of her senses for an hour, and every year, at that hour, the priest

approaches her to take her orders. She then half uprises in her oaken chest, and asks, "Is my church still standing?" "Yes," replies the priest. "Would to Heaven," she answers, "it had fallen to the ground!" She then sinks back with a deep sigh, and the lid of the coffer is closed again.

A poor sailor, who lost his son in a shipwreck, went mad for grief. Every day he gets into his boat and sails away to the open sea. There, he rolls a drum with all his might, and calls to his son in a loud voice, "Come, come; come out of your hiding-place! Swim hither, and I will put you beside me in my boat. If you are dead, I will give you a grave in the cemetery, a grave among the shrubs and flowers. You will sleep better there than beneath the waves." But he calls and looks out in vain. At nightfall he returns, saying, "To-morrow, I will go further; my poor boy did not hear me."

Most of these legends are melancholy in their character, and turn upon the different phases of family affection. For instance: Dyring went to a distant island and took a handsome girl to wife. They lived together seven years, and she presented him with seven children. Then death came into the country, and carried off the wife, so fresh and so rosy. Dyring went to a distant island, married another girl, and brought her home. But this one was unkind and hard-hearted. When she entered her husband's house, the seven children wept; they wept and were anxious. She repulsed them with her foot. She gave them neither beer nor bread, and told them, "You shall sleep on straw, with nothing to cover you." She extinguished the great torches, and said, "You shall remain in darkness."

The children wept very late into the night. Their mother heard them, where she lay, under the earth. "Oh!" she cried, "that I could go and see my little children!" She prayed and prayed till she obtained permission to go and see her little children, on condition that, at cock-crow, she would leave them. So the poor mother raised herself on her weary legs, and climbed over the stone wall of the burial-ground. She traversed the village, and the dogs howled as they heard her pass. She reached the door of her former dwelling; her eldest daughter was standing there.

"What are you doing here, my child?" she asked. "How are your brothers and sisters?"

"You are a fine grand lady, but you are not my darling mother. My mother's cheeks were white and red, whilst you are as pale as death."

"And how can I be white and red, after reposing so long in my coffin?"

She went into the chamber; her little children were there with tears on their cheeks. She took one and combed it, smoothed the hair of another, and caressed a third and a fourth. She took the fifth in her arms and opened her bosom to it. Then, calling her eldest daughter, "Go and tell Dyring to come here," she said. When Dyring came, she spoke to him angrily. "I left you beer and bread, and my children are

hungry and thirsty. I left you blue cushions and coverlids, and my children sleep on naked straw. I left you tall flambeaux, and my children are in darkness. If you often make me thus return by night, misfortune will come of it." At this the mother-in-law exclaimed, "Henceforward I will be kind to your children." And from that day, whenever the husband and wife heard the dogs growl, they gave the children beer and bread; and when they heard them howl and bark, they went and hid themselves, lest they should see the dead woman come back again.

The Kæmpeviser are songs and stories written in the national language of Denmark. They contain, amongst others, the touching history of Queen Dagmar (Aurora, or Daybreak), who, for seven years, was adored by the king and his people, and who died in May, 1212. Her arrival in Denmark is thus related:

King Valdemar and his noble, Strange Ebbeson, are sitting in the castle hall, and are discoursing together.

"Do you hear, noble Ebbeson, what I tell you? You will set out for Bohemia, from whence you will bring me back my young bride."

Noble Ebbeson, of handsome mien and eloquent speech, replied, "If I go to Bohemia, who will accompany me?"

"Choose first," replied the king, "the young Lord Limbek and Olaf Glück; choose the rich Seigneur Peter Glob and others, according to your liking."

At their departure, the king accompanied them to the shore with a numerous and brilliant suite. For three weeks they sailed over the azure waves, and when they caught sight of the land of Bohemia they gaily saluted it. They cast anchor, furled their sails, and landed. The retinue was dazzling to behold, preceded by the noble Ebbeson.

"God be with you, King of Bohemia! You are a prince worthy of all honour. King Valdemar of Denmark sends me to you; he loves your daughter, and demands her hand."

The king then entered his palace to consult with the queen. "There are some noble seigneurs from Denmark, who are come to take our daughter away. If mighty Valdemar desires to espouse her, we will leave her to these brilliant lords, and give a rich dowry with her hand."

They dressed the princess in blue silk and led her into the great hall. "Here is the princess herself, so beautiful in modesty and virtue." They then brought the chess-board and the table of massive gold, that the noble Ebbeson might play with the princess and converse with her alone. At the third move they were agreed; noble Ebbeson had won a good wife for his king. The silken carpets were spread on the ground, and a long train accompanied the princess to the place of embarkation. She bade adieu to her dear parents, and they blessed her from a distance. She was gentle and delicate. She arrived by the island of Manøe, to the west of Schleswig. The King of Denmark made his horse prance on the shore of Ripen.

"Noble Ebbeson," asked the princess, "be-

fore we land, tell me who is that bold cavalier who rides to and fro along the bank?"

"You are welcome, princess," replied Ebbeson; "but do not speak so loud. It is King Valdemar of Denmark, come to offer three crowns to his bride."

"Shame on you, noble Ebbeson! Have you deceived me? Has King Valdemar of Denmark only one eye?"

"King Valdemar is a hero worthy of the blood of Orlog; he has reconquered for Denmark all the land to the north of the Elbe. Such glory must needs be purchased by something."

The wedding was brilliant, and the young couple loved each other from the bottom of their hearts. It was a happy time for all in Denmark. Queen Dagmar took care of the honest peasant; he lived without burthen, and in peace. She was the sweetest flower in Denmark's garden.

DR. PEREGRINE'S PAGE.

I.

IN one of the earlier volumes of my diary I find the following passage:

"Tuesday, January 17th, 18—. This morning, at half-past three a.m., poor John Bentmore expired. Conscious to the last—full of self-condemnation for errors which were more those of judgment than intention; pious, earnest, humble-minded, he died, bitterly accusing himself of having injured his boy's prospects. A touching end. I promised to befriend his child. How shall I fulfil that promise?"

Of all my humble protégés, John Bentmore was the most grateful, and the least satisfactory. He was emphatically an unlucky man. Nothing prospered with him. He had tried everything. Service in all sorts of capacities. He had been a greengrocer, a lodging-house keeper; a traveller for a wine merchant; a traveller in the grocery line; foreman to an upholsterer. I got up a subscription for him, and fitted him out for Australia; but in less than two years he was back again, with little besides the clothes which, to use his own expression, he stood upright in. By-and-by he set up for himself in the upholstery trade with capital borrowed from one of his old employers. He had been brought up to it, his father having been an upholsterer; and he ought to have understood it himself. But his ill luck, or rather his want of business habits, pursued him still. He employed the best men; he bought the best materials. Yet, his wood always warped; his blinds never worked properly; his carpets wore white; his very nails never held. He was wont to admit himself with a sigh, as he wiped the perspiration from his brow, that "there was a many complaints. He didn't know how it was, but there was a many complaints."

At last he sunk under his ill fortune. On his death-bed he accused himself bitterly, and bewailed the destitute state of his son, whose future prospects naturally formed his chief anxiety. I had much ado to reconcile him to the idea of the boy's seeking his living (at any

rate in the first instance) by servitude, and I undertook, before I sought a service for Arthur, to induce Mr. Moreen, the upholsterer—with whom John Bentmore had lived twice as foreman—to employ him; but John's hopes on this head were slight. "He won't do it, sir," he said, with a sigh of self-reproach; "and I don't deserve that he should. He's a just man—Mr. Moreen. And I—I owe him money. I owe him a large sum of money, and he's not one to overlook that. If indeed he would let the boy work for him any number of years without wages, and so pay him off what I owe, that would be a blessed thing! but he won't do it! he won't do it, sir. I have enraged him; and Mrs. Moreen—she can't overlook his having lent me the money; not but what it would be the best thing they could do to get paid; for Arthur would do his duty by them, I'm sure of that. He's very different from me, you see, sir—a deal better. He's got twenty times my head for figures, and book-keeping, and that. He'll make a first-rate man of business, will Arthur. They say at his school, that he's an uncommon turn for mathematics. It is a pity, ain't it, to make a menial of such a lad as that?"

And the father looked proudly and fondly at his boy, who was seated in the hospital window intent upon a book; and a single tear rolled down upon his pillow.

The hour came at last. He fixed on his boy a glance of loving recognition, and the tender light faded away; in its place there came a film, and all was over.

II.

Arthur Bentmore had not completed his thirteenth year when his father died. He was tall for his age, with small and well-cut features. The mouth was full and handsome; but the compressed lips, and square chin, indicated firmness, whilst the singularly prominent eyes had in them a thoughtful abstraction unusual in one so young. I had learnt from Mr. Gillies, his schoolmaster (whom I had met more than once by his father's bedside), that he was studious and persevering, though not particularly clever; and from the father himself, that he was dutiful and obedient in no ordinary degree. But my own observations had served rather to puzzle than to enlighten me, although at one conclusion I *had* arrived, namely, that he was reserved even to secretiveness. His nature seemed to be one of those which, to open at all, must be wrenched open.

His father's affairs were set in order with as little delay as possible. When all was sold, scarcely enough remained to pay the funeral and other necessary expenses; nothing whatever towards defraying Mr. Moreen's debt. I had clothed the boy in decent mourning, and paid his small arrears of schooling myself, taking him for the moment into my own lodging; and now I felt it was time to think of putting him in some way of earning an independent livelihood; but it was not without the utmost difficulty and considerable exercise of patience, that I wrung from him the confession that he would rather be an upholsterer than a servant.

I took him to Mr. Moreen, whom I had long been in the habit of attending professionally, and who I believed had a real regard for me. I would make an attempt in that quarter. After all, it could but fail.

Mr. Moreen was a huge, sturdy, ruddy-faced giant, working hard, living generously, doing business, as business should be done, in a business-like way. He piqued himself on the quality of his materials, and the excellence of his workmanship, and was wont to look with an eye of something like contempt on any work but his own. Though as straightforward, shrewd, and experienced a tradesman as London ever produced, he was completely under the thumb of his wife. He came down to us now, from the comfortable meat tea he had been enjoying with Mrs. M. (as he respectfully called her) and the children, wiping the crumbs from his mouth as he entered. He smiled on seeing me; but cast a sharp glance of something like disfavour on my companion; who, pale and slender, looked above his station in his new mourning suit, relieved by an inch or two of his father's gold chain, that peeped from his waistcoat. I said it had been his late foreman's last wish that his son should be brought up to the trade he had followed himself, and that he had not been without hope that Mr. Moreen would permit the boy to be in his shop, at least for a while.

The upholsterer heard me attentively to the end. He was not one to speak hastily, nor yet one to mince matters when he did speak. He knew his own mind, in general—when Mrs. M. was not by.

"Sir, I wouldn't have a son of John Bentmore's in my shop, not if you was to pay me all he owed, and fifty pounds more to the back of that. I've had enough of the father; I don't want no more of the lot. That boy'll be just like 'em all—turn out as bad as the rest. John Bentmore used me ill, sir. I trusted him, and he deceived me. He deceived me."

"Not wilfully!" I interrupted. "When he borrowed that money, he intended to repay it."

"I trusted him, and he deceived me," Mr. Moreen resumed, not condescending to notice my interruption. "He promised in black and white, that he would pay back that money before the year were out, and he never paid me a shilling of it—no, nor meant to it. There's no honesty in the blood, that's where it is! there's no honesty in the blood! Eighty-seven pounds nine shillings and threepence that man owed me, and I shall never see a farthing of it. No, sir, I thank *you*; but I'll have nothing to do with his boy."

"Father would have tried to pay you, if he had lived, sir!" Arthur's young voice was heard to say; "I know he would have done his best to pay you."

I glanced at the boy. He was pale, and the perspiration stood in beads upon his forehead. His eyes, full of an eager and glowing light, were fixed intently on the upholsterer. My heart bled for him. It was cruel to speak thus of his dead father in his presence.

"Not he!" Mr. Moreen replied, putting his hands into his waistcoat-pockets, and jingling his loose silver, with a dogged kind of carelessness. "Not he! 'twasn't in him. 'Twasn't in him, no more than 'twas in his brother Charles, who died some eight or nine years ago, deep in debt. He was another of the same sort—always borrowing, never paying nobody again—always in trouble and difficulties—and *prison* (with a strong emphasis). It's in the blood. There's no backbone among them! And the boy's one of them. Of course!"

He jerked out these sentences with strong contempt, making short pauses between each, that seemed to add tenfold weight to his words.

I felt indignant at the cruelty of such remarks, before a lad whose parent was scarcely yet cold in his grave. "Mr. Moreen," I said, "you have a perfect right to refuse to employ the lad, but you have no right to wound him, by casting bitter reflections on the memory of his father."

"Sir," said Mr. Moreen, taking one square brawny hand out of his pocket, and stretching it towards me with a gesture of power, "I speak as I find. You forget as I've boys myself—many boys."

He heaved a sigh, that seemed to come from some cavernous depths, and made a kind of draught in the shop. "I've no less than five of 'em, and Mrs. M. expecting again in October. Sir, them boys look to me to be fed and clothed, and put in the way of feeding and clothing their own selves. I've enough to do for *them*. They're brought up strict, and honest, and hard, *they* are—not taught to give themselves airs—not dressed like young Eton gents. What *they* wears is paid for, honest and reg'lar. I should scorn to borrow money for *my* boys."

He turned away, and bending a little forward, seemed to be examining a piece of old oak furniture that stood near. But his thoughts were evidently not with that. A moment afterwards he resumed in a somewhat deprecating tone, as though willing to justify himself to me. "You see, sir, I've had little comfort since the day when that money was borrowed. Mrs. M., she'll never overlook it. Nev-er overlook it. Not if she lives to a hundred. She has her ideas, has Mrs. M., and her opinions. Strong. She was always against lending of it. Many a time she says to me, says she, 'Mark my words, M. Don't you trust that Bentmore—he's a slippery fellow.' If you please, sir," said Mr. Moreen, suddenly taking his hands from his pockets, and changing his tone to one of uncommon briskness, by way of changing the subject, "if you please, sir, we'll say no more about it. Only I won't have nothing to do with his lad."

And so we parted.

III.

A page's place was soon found for Arthur Bentmore; and a good one. One of my patients willingly engaged him, inexperienced as he was, after hearing the particulars of his story from me. Admiral and Mrs. Sullivan were kindly, liberal people, living alone, spoiling their servants, as they would have spoilt their children

if they had had any, laying themselves out to be imposed upon in a hundred ways, on all sides. Their butler, Mr. Tapps, having decanted their wine, and imbibed the greater part of it, for two-and-twenty years, was looked upon by them as a priceless treasure. Their coachman, a corpulent but lenient man, allowed them the use of their horses for an hour or two occasionally, when his wife thought it good for him to drive; nor was there a pair in all London that could match his for sleek and decorous slowness. The lady's-maid had ruled her mistress with a yard measure of iron for thirty years, and was looked upon by that lady with a truly filial respect. The cook had grown fat on the proceeds of that which she sold out of her luxurious kitchen. The house-maid and scullery-maid might as yet be considered babies in the service, having been only three and four years in the family; but, influenced by the general tone of the establishment, they were of course prepared to remain there (if spared, and not taken possession of by the baker or the greengrocer) half a century at least. Every one of the domestics spoke of the house, and all it contained, as theirs. It was "our plate," "our carriage," "our dinner-parties," "our uniforms," "our court dresses," and "our diamonds."

The first thing done by the treasure, Mr. Tapps, on the new page being respectfully presented to him by his mistress in my presence, was to alter his cognomen to that of Jeames. He could not be expected to call him any other. Of course not. Jeames were the proper name for a page, and had been ever since he were a page himself. "And if you does as I tell you," said Mr. Tapps, with dignified emphasis, turning to the *ci-devant* Arthur, and mingling encouragement with the stern dignity of office, "if you does as I tell you, and minds nothing nor nobody else, you'll do well enough in time, I des-say."

During the page's probation, the reports of his conduct were excellent. Mrs. Sullivan had nothing to say but in his praise. Tapps, the treasure, spoke highly of him. Tapps was entirely satisfied. He had broken wonderfully little crockery for a raw lad in his first service, and there was a marked improvement in his double knocks.

I was sitting one morning in my consulting-room, having just dismissed the last of my gratuitous patients, when my page (I called him my page, from having put a guiding hand to his destiny) called upon me. He looked thin and ill, and paler even than usual.

"Nothing wrong, I hope?" I said, thinking that the boy grew too fast, and that he ought to be well nourished, and not overworked.

"Nothing, sir. I came to speak to you on a little matter that—"

He paused.

"What is it?"

"Well, sir, I came to ask you—that is (correcting himself, as though he had not been sufficiently respectful)—I made bold to come and ask you, if you would kindly take care of this money for me, sir?"

He took from his waistcoat-pocket something wrapped in a piece of old newspaper, opened it, and spread it on the table. There were three half-crowns, one shilling, a sixpence, and three-pence in coppers. That amount was also set down on a little square of white paper, in clear figures, which I supposed to be his.

"Certainly," I said. "I will keep this for you, if you wish it. What is it for?"

He was silent.

"Is it for any particular object?"

"Well—yes, sir,"

"Perhaps you would rather not tell me?"

He considered a moment, and then answered that "It is towards paying that debt."

"That debt! What debt?"

"Father's debt to Mr. Moreen, you know, sir. Father owed him eighty-seven pounds nine shillings and three-pence," he said.

I looked at the little heap of money on the table, and involuntarily smiled.

"My good boy, you don't hope that you can pay such a sum as that?"

"I mean to pay it, sir."

"You may mean to pay it, and it shows an honesty of intention that I cannot too highly commend; but you can't pay it, my boy. Nor would Mr. Moreen dream of expecting you to do so. It would take a lifetime of service to pay off such a debt as that. Let me see. What are your wages?"

"Eight guineas a year, sir, two suits of livery, and one working suit, one hat, and eighteen-pence a week for beer."

"Tell me what put this idea into your head?"

"Mr. Moreen, sir."

"Mr. Moreen! Have you seen him, then?"

"No, sir; not again; but you remember, sir, he said that—" The boy paused, and taking a step forward, added very low, as though what he was about to utter was too dreadful to be spoken aloud—"that there was no honesty in the blood—*no honesty in the blood, sir!*"

I felt a greater interest in him at that moment than I had ever done before. It was evident to me now, that the boy had strong and deep feelings, though from some cause he never gave them expression.

"Now, don't let those words rankle in your mind, Arthur," I said, kindly, laying my hand upon his thin shoulder; "Mr. Moreen was angry when he said that, and not without cause, as you know; for your father—well! Your father did him an injury. People say things when they're angry, that they don't hold to afterwards. We all do."

"Mr. Moreen *will* hold to it. He believes it, sir. He said we were a bad lot, all of us. He said I should turn out as bad as the rest. He said there was no honesty in the blood."

The boy still spoke low, but with rapid utterance, and as though he had repeated those words again and again to himself scores of times.

"Take back this money," I said. "I will answer for it that Mr. Moreen would wish you to do so. I know him better than you do; and I am certain that the last thing he would dream

of doing, would be to take the little earnings of a poor lad like you."

"I can't take back that money, sir."

There was a pause.

"Shall I ask Mr. Moreen to consent to receive it, as a proof of your honest desire to pay what is owed?"

He became excited immediately.

"Oh pray! *pray* don't do that, sir! I shall be sorry I told you at all, if you do. Pray keep it for me, sir; just as it is. Only keep it for the present, and say nothing to him—nothing to him."

He seemed to lay the matter so much to heart, that, after a few more ineffectual remonstrances, I consented to humour him. So I sealed up the money in his presence, writing on the outside that it was a deposit of Arthur Bentmore's.

I did not forget to tell Mrs. Sullivan that I was less satisfied with her page's looks, than she was with his conduct; that he was growing too rapidly, and was more emaciated than I liked to see. He should be generously fed, and above all, not be stinted in his sleep. She agreed with me as to the alteration of his looks;—said she had herself felt uneasy about it; had intended to consult me in the matter; and summoned The Treasure to our conference.

Tapps had volumes to say on the subject: no boy, especially a growing boy, couldn't expect to be strong, that didn't take kindly to his beer; which Jeames, he never had from the first. Jeames was a strange boy. There was no knowing where to have him. He never took a drop o' beer from one month's end to another, didn't Jeames! Why not, Dr. Peregrine would ask? which of course—why not? Why! he actually preferred water! But some was like that; and a great misfortune too. It wasn't for the saving neither. Jeames was a strange party. In fact, Mr. Tapps had never known but one other like him—and *he* was a very strange party indeed.

Time passed on; and I felt so entirely at ease about the boy—so satisfied that he would now do well without any help of mine—that I troubled myself but little about him. He had been out of town with the family, and had grown so tall, that he overtopped Mr. Tapps; a liberty which must have seemed strange to the well-regulated mind of that individual. His mistress had been obliged to promote him from buttons to a regular livery; and in the social intercourse of the servants' hall, he was now "our footman." Thus satisfactorily closed his second year of service; but with the opening of the third, came the startling intelligence that he was "leaving to better himself!"

I did not attend Lady Fetherstone, Arthur's new mistress, and, therefore, saw less of him than before; although I did occasionally catch a glimpse of him on the box of his lady's old-fashioned barouche, during my professional progresses: till at length the closed shutters of her ladyship's house in Bumpton-street, indicated that she, her companion, her lapdog, and the rest of the establishment, had adjourned for the autumn to Tunbridge Wells.

IV.

One morning in the following June I was awoke at about half-past six o'clock, by a peculiarly sharp ring at my professional door-bell. I had been up all night with a patient in dangerous circumstances, and had scarcely been asleep a couple of hours; but I could not be insensible to the shrill urgency of that appeal. I was wide awake in a moment. There was a short pause, a muttered colloquy between my housemaid and some one else; she knocked at my door (I slept on the ground floor), and, opening it, showed a pale and startled countenance.

"Sir! sir!" she said, in hurried tones, "Arthur Bentmore is come for you directly—a dreadful thing! the butler at Lady Fetherstone's has destroyed himself!"

I was soon at the scene of the catastrophe. I found a policeman already there in charge of the body, and, perceiving at once that life had been extinct some hours, I lost no time in going up to the lady. She had recovered from her swoon, but was in a fearful state of nervous excitement, and for some time it was unsafe to leave her; for the shock seemed to have partially unsettled her reason. After a while, however, the remedies I employed began to produce the desired effect, and I had the satisfaction of seeing her at last gradually sinking to sleep, with her hand clasped in that of Arthur's former mistress, Mrs. Sullivan.

The scene in that house was a shocking one to witness. The mother and sister of the suicide hung over his mangled remains with tears and groans of anguish; whilst the servants of the establishment, distracted at the tragical end of one with whom they had lived in daily companionship, were totally unable to afford them any comfort.

The cause of the catastrophe was soon but too clear. The misguided man was known to have been long in the habit of betting; and it came out, through a friend who had chanced to call at the house, unaware of what had happened, that he had lost so large a sum the previous day at the Derby, as to make it easy to understand that he dared not face the ruin such a debt must bring upon him.

I was in and out of Lady Fetherstone's house constantly that day. Her staunch friends, Admiral and Mrs. Sullivan, insisted upon it. Thus I had ample opportunity of observing the conduct of Arthur, under circumstances not a little trying to one so young. Of all the inmates of that house, he was the only one who seemed to retain composure, or common sense. Nothing tends to re-settle nerves that have been unusually excited—especially servants' nerves—so much as the sight of a calm and matter-of-fact attention to the small duties of life. Mrs. Cook began by taking no notice of what Jeames was about, and continuing her spasmodic heavings and groanings; but after a little she could not resist watching to see how he did what she ought to have been doing; from watching she got to correction and advice; and finally she condescendingly approached, and began to rectify

his errors. When I entered the kitchen to prescribe for her—having been informed by the under housemaid that she was at the point of death—I found her with a very red face, in the midst of an animated argument with Jeames as to the proper management of gravy.

When the latter was interrogated as to the butler's habits of life, some curious particulars came out. It appeared that the man never did anything in the house except wait at table, and occasionally open the door in the absence of the footman. He was very rarely at home; often spending entire nights out, and returning about six in the morning, when he was always let in by Arthur, who, summer and winter, rose at five. When pressed as to his own reasons for rising so early, he hesitated at first; but at length replied that he always occupied himself about his own affairs before six o'clock, when he considered his day's work for the family ought to begin. Did his mistress know of her butler's proceedings? He could not say. Mr. Jacobs (the butler) had a key of the house door. He had mentioned to him that he did not wish to have this spoken of, as it might occasion unpleasantness; and he should be sorry to lose the convenience.

Was he aware of Mr. Jacobs's practice of betting? He was. Had he ever been induced himself to do the like? No answer; and the question was, after a little discussion, withdrawn. Had he had any suspicion of the butler's losses at Epsom? He had had.

But, in spite of the quiet and self-possessed manner in which Arthur had given his evidence, and its undoubted truthfulness, there was yet something about him which (although I should have been at a loss to define it) occasioned in my mind not only an uncomfortable impression that he knew much more than he chose to divulge of the butler's affairs, but that he was also, to a certain extent, a participator in the practice that had led to so fearful a result. I could hardly explain, even to myself, why I was convinced of this; but my impression grew in strength, the more I saw of, and conversed with him. He did not indeed deny, though he never positively admitted, that he *had* betted; but many little circumstances that I not only observed now, but remembered to have noticed since his removal to Lady Fetherstone's (amongst others, a remarkable shabbiness in such articles of his attire as he had to purchase himself), tended to convince me that he had been led to indulge in this dangerous practice, and was greatly straitened in means in consequence.

I had much serious talk with him at that time; speaking with an earnest authority which I felt our mutual relations not only warranted, but called for. But although he listened with respectful attention, and an appearance of being impressed by what I said; and although he once voluntarily promised me never to bet in future (he did not say *again*); he was still silent and uncommunicative, and therefore, to a certain degree, unsatisfactory.

I was much pressed for time at this period, and preoccupied with anxious and difficult cases; but the thought of Arthur Bentmore was seldom long absent from my mind. His pale miserable face actually haunted me. His father had confided him to my care, and I trembled for his future. I saw him on the brink of ruin—perhaps of destruction—yet I was powerless to avert either. Meanwhile, a change took place in his position and circumstances, which tended rather to increase than to diminish my anxiety on his account. He obtained the late butler's place.

V.

One fine clear winter's day, some fourteen months after the death of Mr. Jacobs, as I was standing with my back to the fire in my consulting-room, Arthur Bentmore, dressed in neat plain clothes, entered, hat in hand.

He had grown very much during the last twelvemonth; but he was thinner and paler than I had ever before seen him. He was literally cadaverous.

Our first mutual greetings over, he informed me that he had come for two purposes: the first, to announce that he was about to leave Lady Fetherstone.

I started. About to leave Lady Fetherstone? So good a service? so generous a mistress? who valued him, as I had reason to know, very highly! Something of undefined apprehension shot through my mind.

But he went on to explain that he had not felt well for some weeks; had been decidedly worse quite lately; and he was conscious that he required *rest*—rest, entire and complete. He was sorry, very sorry, to leave Lady Fetherstone; she had been most kind to him; but he should be laid up if he remained. He had told her how it was; and she had quite acquiesced. He was to leave in a month, if her ladyship could suit herself. He required, as it were, to—take breath. He drew—not without a visible effort—a long breath as he spoke; and I mentally resolved that as soon as his time was up, he should come to my house and submit to regular professional treatment from me.

But what was the other purpose for which he had come?

He put his hat down on the floor. "You have by you, sir," he answered, "some money of mine."

"Money of yours!"

"Some silver, sir; only a trifle; nine shillings. I brought it, if you remember, when I was a lad; one morning in summer; and you put it in your desk, to keep for me."

I remembered perfectly now the secret drawer in which I had placed it. Yes; there was the silver; almost black from age; three half-crowns, two shillings, and a sixpence, with the three-pence wrapped up in a paper by themselves. As I pushed the little heap towards him, I said, with a certain anxiety, "Surely, my good Arthur, you don't need such a sum as this."

He met my gaze without flinching; yet a slight tinge of colour rose to his cheek. I saw

it distinctly, as he said, "I *do* want it, if you please, sir. You remember my father's debt to Mr. Moreen."

"Certainly. Full well."

"I wish to pay it; and I make bold to ask you to go with me when I pay it, sir."

He made a step forward, and laying an envelope on the table, "There," said he, "are eighty-seven pounds, which, with the silver and coppers you have there, makes up the sum owing."

I was so much astonished as to be for the moment incapable of reflection. But soon, to amazement, succeeded another feeling. The old painful fear shot through me. I fixed my eyes steadily on his.

"Arthur! how came you by all this money?"

He put his hand in his pocket and laid before me a paper containing an exact account of every shilling he had ever saved in service, and how he had saved it.

This paper recorded a daily, hourly series of sacrifices throughout the long course of four years; begun at the age when self-conquest is the hardest, self-indulgence the most natural; continued with unchanging resolution in spite of every trial, every temptation; persisted in to the very end.

He spoke only once; as I was approaching the end of his extraordinary memorandum; but it was simply to explain that Mr. Gillies, the schoolmaster, had put this money, at various times, into the savings-bank for him, and had thus realised a small increase, which, with the fourteen shillings overplus in the account—the month's wages and beer money that would be due to him next month—and a few shillings of presents he had accumulated, would go to maintain him whilst he should continue out of service. He might, he observed, have paid off this debt a little sooner, as I could see; but he considered that he should do wrong to leave himself entirely without money.

I heard him, as he spoke, but I scarcely heeded him. My mind—my heart were too full. I was thinking of the suspicions I had harboured against him—of the wrong I had done him in my own thoughts; and he, all the while, biding his time; leading a life of such unexampled self-denial! To him it seemed, however, that he had done no more than was natural to be done in similar circumstances.

"You know, Mr. Moreen said, sir, that there was no honesty in the blood! *no honesty in the blood!* He said father was not honest: that we was all a bad lot together. Now, I knew that father *was* honest. The debt had been his greatest distress in his last hours. I had reason to know that; for many and many a time he charged me to pay it; and so to clear his memory. How, then, could I do other than pay it?"

VI.

Mr. Moreen had risen materially in the world. He had increased in both bodily and worldly substance. But though a man, solid in every sense of the word, and with—well! we will say—some

money in the funds, Mr. Moreen still stuck to the old shop.

In the doorway of this old shop stood Mr. Moreen now, as Arthur and I drove up in the modest brougham, which, in those days, I hired for my professional visits. He was respectfully seeing a great lady out; he flourished his rule by way of saluting me, and added his usual respectful bow and smile, but did not speak till the coroneted carriage with its high stepping-bays had dashed from the door. "That's the countess—that is," he said, as we entered. "She comes here most days, and stays—well! I suppose she stays an hour or more, choosing, and changing, and ordering of the carvings for the old oak sideboard she's a having put together. It'll be a splendid sideboard when done. A surprise, too, for his lordship. But, dear me, she gives herself a deal of trouble more than she need to! She will have this, and she won't have that, and she thinks she'd fancy the other! It would be better left to me—better left to me. But these great ladies, d'ye see, they're—they're *wilful* (with a strong emphasis on the word); I suppose they've got nothing else to do."

He winked at me with that clear, honest, blue eye of his, and laughed with the low, lazy, internal chuckle common to such large men; and when I observed that it was not your great ladies only that were wilful, he laughed still more. "Ha," he said, "all women *was* wilful, not a doubt about it."

A half-bantering, half-serious conversation followed, with mutual friendly inquiries as to health, and so forth; then there was a pause, and, for the first time, he looked at my companion. But his glance was momentary, and had nothing of recognition in it.

"I see you don't remember this young man," I said, "yet he is an old acquaintance of yours, Arthur Bentmore."

"Indeed?"

He turned and surveyed him with an easy good-natured glance. "Young Bentmore! Indeed! He have grown precious tall—a good bit taller than my John, and they're about the same age, I think. But he don't look strong. I'm afraid you don't have your health, young man! Let me see," Mr. Moreen put his rule meditatively to his lips, pursing them up as though about to whistle. "Didn't I see something in the papers about young Bentmore, a year or a year and a half ago? A inquest, or something? Ah! true! I recollect. Butler, in your fam'ly (turning to Arthur). True—true! Yes, I remember. And you give your evidence very proper. Mrs. M., she read it all out loud to us at tea; seeing of your name, and what the coroner said and all. But I hope," added the upholsterer, suddenly changing the expression of his good-humoured face to one of stern severity, and laying a long, square, powerful forefinger upon Arthur's coat; "excuse *me*, young man, but I hope you don't bet yourself! Betting will never come to no good; be sure of that."

"No! no!" I said, interposing, "Arthur has come to-day about a little matter of business with you, Mr. Moreen, if you have leisure to attend to it."

"With me?"

Again the upholsterer looked at the young man. This time more attentively; and in one moment he was a different person himself. It had been chat; good-humoured friendly chat, between us hitherto; now it was business.

"I suppose it's the old story," he said, laying down his rule, and putting his hands in his pockets, as if to guard what he might possess there. "The old story! Wants employment! But——"

He shook his head. It was a most expressive shake.

"I am not come to ask for anything," Arthur Bentmore said, quietly. "You remember the debt my father owed you, Mr. Moreen?"

"I—should—think—I—did!" the upholsterer answered, very slowly, laying marked emphasis on each separate word. "I'm more likely to remember that debt than I am ever to get a farthing of it, by a precious deal! Eighty-seven pounds nine shillings and threepence. That was the amount. Mrs. M. and I had more words concerning of that debt than we ever had 'bout anything; I think she's never forgotten it. Nor she's never discontinued throwing of it in my teeth. She were against my lending of it from the first; and that (turning to me), that give her a handle, d'ye see, against me. Of course. She'd no opinion of John Bentmore. Never had."

He had become confidential again. He never could help it, when he spoke of his wife. And he always jerked out his sentences, and made long pauses between, when that dreaded individual was in question. It was like an occasional brief letting off of steam lest the engine should burst.

Arthur waited patiently, without attempting to interrupt him.

"Well!" said Mr. Moreen at last, jingling his silver with both hands; "what of that debt? You're not——" he burst into a low laugh of exquisite enjoyment. "You're not—come to—to pay it? Are ye, young man?"

He turned to me, his blue eyes swimming in tears of rapture at the extravagance of his own humour, and laughed till his face grew purple.

"I *am* come to pay it," Arthur Bentmore replied, slowly; and, opening the parcel he had all along held tightly in one hand, spread out on a buhl table that stood near the fruits of four years' self-denial.

There was a dead silence.

Not for a twelvemonth—not for a lifetime—of fees—would I have lost that scene.

Mr. Moreen's laugh had stopped. He stood silent; vacantly staring at the money.

At last he turned to me.

"Of course, doctor, *you* lent him this!" he said gravely, and with frequent pauses, as though reflecting; "but I couldn't think of it. Cert'n'y not. On no account. I couldn't think of taking such a thing from you."

"No one has lent me this money," Arthur said; "I have earned it all. Doctor Peregrine knows it; Doctor Peregrine will tell you how it was earned. Sir, when I was a little lad, you told me here—in this very shop—standing where we now stand—that my father—God bless him!—was not an honest man. You said there was no honesty in the blood. You said I should turn out bad, like the rest of us! I was but young then—only thirteen. When you said those cruel words of my dead father, I resolved that I would never rest till I had paid you, and proved them false. It has been hard to do; so hard, that it has changed my whole nature, I often think. No one knows what I have gone through—not a living creature but myself! but I would have gone through fifty times as much to pay that debt! I thank God that I have lived to pay it, and to clear my father's memory."

I write this now; I write the words I heard him speak, but I can no more give a notion of their effect than I could if I had never heard them. He, at all times so subdued, so self-possessed, so impossible to rouse, was suddenly transformed into another creature. Form, voice, countenance—all changed. His words came forth rapidly. The pent-up emotions of those four toiling, self-denying years, found a vent at last.

"And now, sir! now!" Arthur cried, raising his thin hand with a gesture that thrilled through my very heart; "believe me, who have never wilfully uttered one false word from the hour when you did us that cruel wrong—my father was an honest man. I say it in my Maker's presence. Perhaps in his!"

Arthur stopped short; for he found himself suddenly seized by the powerful grasp of Mr. Moreen, and whirled, rather than drawn, to the window.

"Well, but you know," said the upholsterer, drawing him nearer, and then holding him further off, as you would a picture you were examining in different lights; but all the while clenching him in his tremendous hand as in a vice. "You're a grand fellow, you are! *You* pay your father's debts, do ye? But you're a grand fellow! What? You laid by to pay me, did ye? all these years! Why! you *are* a grand fellow! *You* did it, did ye? And I said you weren't honest. Well! I wish I'd been—I wish my tongue had been cut out before I said it. But you know you *are* honest. You! a little lad as you was. *You* pay the old man's debt. Yes! you have—you *have* paid it. Oh! but you're a grand fellow."

Ringling the changes on these words—unable to express the feelings that were bursting his heart—upheaving his broad chest—choking his voice—the tears rained down the honest man's cheeks, and he knew it no more than did Mrs. Moreen, sitting at work with her girls above stairs.

Mr. Moreen's emotion had the natural effect of calming Arthur's. The poor lad was passive in his grasp. But after a time the worthy up-

holsterer began to return as it were to himself. He relaxed his hold; and taking out his pocket-handkerchief, wiped his eyes and face.

"I ask pardon, sir," he said, turning to me, and speaking in a low and apologetic tone; "I ask pardon, I'm sure; but I'm—I'm—I never was so—I never see such a thing as this before. It took me unprepared, you see. I didn't look for such a thing. Not at all. And to think—to think that them words of mine should have cut so deep—a poor young lad like that—that's where it is, you see." Then, turning to Arthur, "You're a grand fellow, sir!"

Strange—the effect of that "sir" in Mr. Moreen's mouth, as addressed to Arthur Bentmore. How well I understood it: better than he did himself. It was the involuntary, unconscious homage paid to the honesty of that stripling, by the sturdy tradesman who valued honesty above all earthly treasures.

"But you know I can't take it, sir!" Mr. Moreen suddenly exclaimed, when he had become more cool; recalled to the consideration of the money by the sight of it spread out on the buhl table. "I can't take them earnings and savings of that lad's. It can't be. The thing ain't in nature. Mrs. M. herself, she wouldn't hear of it."

This was the signal for fresh excitement. A keen dispute followed this declaration, during which it was difficult to say which showed the most determined spirit, Mr. Moreen or Arthur. But it was clear to me that the latter must in the end prevail.

VII.

As soon as his month's notice to leave Lady Fetherstone's service had expired, Arthur Bentmore came to my house to be attended professionally, and, if need be, nursed. It was high time he should do so. He had tasked his constitution too severely. He had grown too fast, worked too hard, and slept too little. Now that the excitement was over which had hitherto borne him up under every trial, he collapsed. There was a reaction.

When at last I had the happiness of seeing him really restored to health, I proposed to him to remain with me as my servant. The plan was precisely what he wished. But after six months' trial of him, I made up my mind that I must give him notice. It went against my conscience to keep him. As a servant, Arthur Bentmore was entirely thrown away. He was intended for higher things. He had a mind capable of mastering almost any subject, and would do honour to any position. Ever since the day of that last memorable visit to my consulting-room, his reserve with me had entirely disappeared. His confidence had been indeed hard to gain; but once gained, it was given wholly, and for ever. He felt towards me now, as towards a father. I had entered into, and sympathised with, the strongest feeling of his nature; I had rejoiced for, and in him, on the one great occasion of his life; and from that hour he was bound to me by the strongest of all ties.

I had mentioned his touching story to persons

who had it in their power materially to befriend him; and the result was that he obtained a situation connected with one of our most important railways. He continued three years in that situation. In the fourth, he was promoted to a more responsible post on the same railway. From this time his rise was singularly rapid. He made money. Being in the way of hearing of good investments, his keen sense and excellent judgment enabled him to avail himself of them. He bought land in the outskirts of a great manufacturing town, built good houses on it, and sold them at an enormous profit. With this money, he entered into still larger speculations (invariably judicious and safe), and in a short time realised a considerable capital. At thirty, Arthur Bentmore was one of the men in that thriving town whose word carried the most weight with it. He remained single till he was five-and-thirty, and then brought to preside over his comfortable home one of the three daughters of his own parish clergyman: a pretty, unpretending, affectionate girl, who had been brought up in a pious and provident household, and was sure to make him a fond and grateful wife. At forty-seven, he was mayor of his town, and had two sons and three daughters, promising and healthy.

During all these years, he and I have kept up a constant and affectionate intercourse. He is now a director of more than one railway, and he comes frequently to London, sometimes alone—brought there by business—sometimes with his wife. On these occasions he always dines with his old friend Gillies—whom he has made comfortable for life—or with me. And there is nothing delights us so much as these quiet dinners.

"It all seems as though it were but yesterday," he would say, as we sat together over our dessert, and he looked across the table at me with those large wonderful eyes of his, that seemed gazing far back into the past; "I often think I am a page again, and dream it too, sometimes. My wife says I still add up shillings and sixpences in my sleep."

With Mr. Moreen, grown very old and infirm, and retired from business (though he still lives in the old shop), Arthur Bentmore has kept up not only an acquaintance, but a steady friendship since those early days.

Arthur had not long quitted my service, when the upholsterer was laid up with an unusually severe attack of bronchitis. He was always very hippish when ill, as many such strong giants are. But his mind, though morbidly sensitive from the state of his body, was full of Arthur Bentmore, towards whom he reproached himself with having acted the part of a brute. He would talk about him to me as long as my

visit lasted, and shed tears when he recurred to the lad's early abstinence from *beer*. That point touched him more than all. "Yes!" he would exclaim, "I don't know as I ever said words I've repented of so much since. I *have* repented of 'em. Bitter. They'll sound to me, when I'm a dying—I know that. And he going on denying of himself his little drop o' beer—a growing chap like that, that wanted it."

In the course of this illness, he confided to me, that although Mrs. M. had been struck with admiration at the noble conduct of the boy, she yet had not at all agreed with *him*, as to the propriety of refusing the money. She took a more business-like view of the transaction. The debt was a debt, she considered, and ought to be discharged. They had no more right to rob their own children of the money, than they had to deprive the lad himself of the satisfaction to his feelings of paying it. "There wouldn't be no merit in what he done, if he was to get it back again," said Mrs. M.

"I don't agree with her *there*, sir," said Mr. Moreen, speaking low and confidentially, as though to differ from Mrs. M. even in the expression of an opinion, were too dangerous a matter to be overheard; "the merit's the same in what he done, anyhow, it seems to me. But Mrs. M., she's so first-rate here, you see!" tapping his own broad forehead, "and she judges of things more by the headpiece than she do by the feelin's. *I'm* not equal to her in that—oh, no!"

When he heard that Arthur was about to set up a house of his own, he entered into a little plot with me, to furnish the living rooms gratis; and never was man more thoroughly happy than Mr. Moreen was during the mysterious consultations and arrangements necessary to effect this object. I persuaded Arthur to visit me in London, whilst he went down to the manufacturing town in question, to superintend every detail. He spared neither trouble nor expense. Nothing was, nothing could be, too good for that grand fellow! And the way in which he revelled in Arthur's astonishment and admiration, when on his return he discovered what had been done, was worth going miles to see.

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